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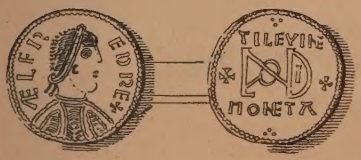
THE LIFE AND TIMES
OF
ALFRED THE GREAT

BEING THE FORD LECTURES FOR 1901

BY

CHARLES PLUMMER, M.A.
FELLOW AND CHAPLAIN OF CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE, OXFORD

WITH AN APPENDIX



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1902
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TO THE

Rev. JOHN EARLE, M.A.

RAWLINSONIAN PROFESSOR OF ANGLO-SAXON

IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

THESE LECTURES

ARE AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

BY HIS

FRIEND AND FORMER PUPIL

THE AUTHOR

PREFACE

THE present work contains the lectures delivered by me on the Ford foundation in Michaelmas Term, 1901. The lectures are printed substantially as they were delivered, with the exception that certain passages which were shortened or omitted in delivery owing to want of time are now given in full.

In the notes will be found the authorities and arguments on which the conclusions of the text are based. The notes occupy a rather large proportion of the book, because I wished to spare my audience, as far as possible, the discussion of technical details.

I have not thought it necessary to recast the form of the lectures. The personal style of address, naturally employed by a lecturer to his audience, is retained in addressing the larger audience to which I now appeal.

The objects which I have aimed at in the lectures are sufficiently explained at the beginning and end of the lectures themselves, and need not be further enlarged on here.

In many ways the lectures would no doubt have been improved, if I had been able to make use of Mr. Stevenson's long-expected edition of Asser. On the other hand there may be advantages in the fact that Mr. Stevenson and myself have worked in perfect independence of one another.

I am sorry that I have had to speak unfavourably of some of the recent Alfred literature which has come under my notice. I am a little jealous for the honour of English

historical scholarship; and I am more than a little jealous that the greatest name in English history should be considered a theme on which any one may try his prentice hand. It suggests the possibility of adding a new chapter to what I have called 'that ever-lengthening treatise De casibus illustrium uirorum' (p. 178).

I have, as usual, to thank all the officials of the Clarendon Press, especially my friend Mr. C. E. Doble, for the interest and care which they have bestowed upon the work; and I must also thank the Delegates for so kindly undertaking the publication of it. The help which I have received in reference to various points is acknowledged in the book itself.

For the map I am indebted to the skill of Mr. B. V. Darbishire.

In the Dedication I have tried to express the gratitude which I owe for the friendship and intellectual sympathy of some quarter of a century.

Finally I would record my great obligations to the electors to the Ford Lectureship for the distinguished honour which they did me in appointing me to the post without any solicitation on my part.

CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE, OXFORD,
March 10, 1902.

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MAP OF ALFRED'S CAMPAIGNS . . . . *To face p.* 1

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA. SS. = Acta Sanctorum, the great Bollandist Collection.

Ang. Sac. = Anglia Sacra, ed. Wharton.

Ann. Camb. = Annales Cambriae, M. H. B.; R. S.; and (more correctly) in Y Cymmrodor, vol. ix.

Ann. Wint. = Annales Wintonienses, R. S.

Asser. The edition in M. H. B. has been chiefly used, the pages of Wise's edition being given in brackets; a new edition by Mr. W. H. Stevenson is expected shortly.

Bede. For the Latin Text of the Hist. Eccl. my own edition is referred to; for the Anglo-Saxon Translation Miller's edition, E. E. T. S., is generally referred to, though Schipper's edition, Bibliothek d. angelsächsischen Prosa, is occasionally cited.

Birch = Birch, Cartularium Saxonicum.

'Blostman' or 'Blooms' = Alfred's translation of the Soliloquies of St. Augustine; for editions see pp. 128, 194.

Boethius, Alfred's translation of, ed. Sedgefield, with Modern English rendering by the same; both at the Clarendon Press.

Bromton = Chronicon Johannis Bromton in vol. i of Twysden's Decem Scriptores.

Brut = Brut y Tywysogion, M. H. B.; R. S.; also ed. J. Gwenogfryn Evans in vol. ii of the Red Book of Hergest.

Capgrave = Capgrave's Chronicle of England, ed. Hingeston, R. S.

C. E., *see* Green.

Chron., *see* Sax. Chron.

Cura Pastoralis = Pope Gregory's treatise on the Pastoral Care; Alfred's translation, ed. Sweet, E. E. T. S.

Dict. Christ. Biog. = Dictionary of Christian Biography.

Dict. Nat. Biog. = Dictionary of National Biography.

Ducange = Ducange, Glossarium mediae et infimae Latinitatis, 4to, 1884–7.

E. E. T. S. = Early English Text Society.

E. H. S. = English Historical Society.

Essays. For the work quoted by this title, *see* p. 6 *note*.

E. T. = English Translation.

Ethelw. = Ethelwerdi Chronica, ed. M. H. B.

Flor. = Florence of Worcester, ed. Thorpe, E. H. S.; also in M. H. B.

Gaimar = Lestorie des Engles solum Geffrei Gaimar, ed. Martin, 2 vols., R. S.; also in M. H. B.
G. P. = William of Malmesbury, Gesta Pontificum, ed. Hamilton, R. S.
G. R. = Gesta Regum, *see* W. M.
Green, C. E. = J. R. Green, The Conquest of England.
H. E. = Historia Ecclesiastica, *see* Bede.
H. H. = Henry of Huntingdon, ed. T. Arnold, R. S.
Ingulf = Ingulfi Historia Croylandensis, in Fulman's Scriptores, vol. i.
K. C. D. = Kemble, Codex Diplomaticus Aeui Saxonici, 6 vols., E. H. S.
Laȝamon = Laȝamon's Brut, ed. Sir F. Madden, 3 vols., 1847.
Lib. de Hyda = Liber Monasterii de Hyda, ed. Edwards, R. S.
M. H. B. = Monumenta Historica Britannica, vol. i (all published).
Migne, Pat. Lat. = Migne, Patrologia Latina.
Muratori = Muratori, Scriptores Rerum Italicarum.
Orosius, Alfred's Translation of, ed. Sweet, E. E. T. S.
Pertz = Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum, folio series.
R. S. = Rolls Series.
R. W. = Roger of Wendover, ed. Coxe, E. H. S.
Sax. Chron. = Saxon Chronicle; except where otherwise indicated, my own edition is referred to.
S. C. H. = Stubbs' Constitutional History, cabinet edition, 3 vols., 1874–8.
Schmid, Gesetze = Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen, von Dr. Reinhold Schmid, 1858.
S. D. = Simeon of Durham, ed. T. Arnold, R. S. (For the meaning of the symbols S. D.[1] and S. D.[2], *see* p. 32 *note*.)
Soliloquies, *see* Blostman.
Thorn = Chronica Gul. Thorn, in Twysden, Decem Scriptores.
W. M. = William of Malmesbury; except where otherwise stated the Gesta Regum is meant; ed. Stubbs, R. S.
Wülker, Grundriss = Grundriss der angelsächsischen Literatur, von R. Wülker, 1885.

KEY TO THE NAMES ON THE MAP

Æscesdun	Ashdown
Æðelinga-ig	Athelney
Apulder	Appledore
Arx Cynuit	Kenny Castle
Basingas	Basing
Beamfleot	Benfleet
Bearrucscir	Berkshire
Bedanford	Bedford
Brecheiniog	(*see* Index)
Brycg	Bridgenorth
Buttingtun	Buttington
Cæginesham	Keynsham
Cantwaraburh	Canterbury
Cent	Kent
Ciceceaster	Chichester
Cippenham	Chippenham
Cirenceaster	Cirencester
Cornwealas	Cornwall
Cruland	Croyland
Cynete	R. Kennet
Defenas	Devon
Dorsæte	Dorset
Dyfed	(*see* Index)
East Engle	East Anglia
East Seaxe	Essex
Ecgbryhtesstan	Brixton Deverill
Englafeld	Englefield
Ethandun	Edington
Exanceaster	Exeter
Fearnham	Farnham
Fullanham	Fulham
Gleaweceaster	Gloucester
Glewissig	(*see* p. 44)
Grantebrycg	Cambridge
Guilou	R. Wylye
Gwent	(*see* Index)
Hamtun	Southampton
Hamtunscir	Hampshire
Hreopedun	Repton
Hrofesceaster	Rochester
Hwiccas	Parts of Worcestershire and Gloucestershire
Iglea	Leigh
Legaceaster	Chester
Limenemuþa	Mouth of Lymne
Lindisse	Lindsey
Lundenburh	London
Lyge	R. Lea
Menevia	St. Davids
Meres-ig	Mersea
Meretun	Marton
Middeltun	King's Milton
Myrce	Mercia
Oxnaford	Oxford
Pedride	R. Parrett
Readingas	Reading
Sæfern	R. Severn
Sandwic	Sandwich
Sceaftesburh	Shaftesbury
Sceoburh	Shoebury
Scireburne	Sherborne
Snotingaham	Nottingham
Sturemuða	Mouth of the Stour
Sumorsæte	Somerset
Suðrige	Surrey
Suðseaxe	Sussex
Swanawic	Swanage
Swealwe	R. Swale
Temes	R. Thames
Tenet	Thanet
Turces-ig	Torksey
Þeodford	Thetford
Use	R. Ouse
Wætlingastræt	Watling Street
Wanating	Wantage
Weage	R. Wye
Werham	Wareham
West Seaxe	Wessex
Weþmor	Wedmore

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF ALFRED THE GREAT

INTRODUCTORY

In Memoriam W. Stubbs.

§ 1. I TRUST you will not think it inappropriate if I begin these lectures by paying my humble tribute of reverence and gratitude to the memory of the great historian who, since my appointment to this post of Ford's Lecturer, has been taken from us. I believe that to him I am very largely indebted for the honour of appearing before you to-day[1]; and if that were so, it would only be of a piece with the many acts of kindness and encouragement which he showed me; encouragement sometimes couched in that humorous form which he loved, and which was occasionally misunderstood by those who had not, like himself, the saving gift of humour. It is not easy to measure the greatness of his loss. He was unquestionably one of the most learned men in Europe; one of the few who could venture to assert an historical negative. If he declared 'there is no authority for such a view or statement,' you knew that there was nothing more to be said. But even more wonderful than the extent of his learning was the way in which he could compress it, and bring it all to bear upon the particular point with which he was

[1] What is stated above is, I believe, quite correct. I am however informed that the first suggestion of my name came from another member of the electoral board, to whom also I am indebted for many kindnesses.

In Memoriam W. Stubbs.

dealing. I daresay it has happened to you, as it has often happened to myself, to read other books and authorities and to fancy that one had gained from them fresh facts and views, and then to go back to Stubbs and find that all our new facts and views were there already; only, until we had read more widely ourselves, we had not eyes to see all that was written there.

§ 2. But with all this, history was never to him mere erudition. It was, on the one hand, the record of human experience, a record 'written for our learning,' and rich with unheeded lessons; on the other, it was the gradual unfolding to human view of the purposes of God, working themselves out not only in spite of, but often by means of the weakness and waywardness of the human agents. And so he views the characters and the course of history, not, as so many historians do, merely from the outside, but, if I may so speak, from within. The characters of history are no mere puppets, to be dressed in picturesque costumes, and made to strut across the stage of the world; they 'are men of like passions with' us, tempted and sinning, and suffering, as we are tempted, sin, and suffer; aspiring and achieving, as we too might aspire and achieve. 'History,' he says, 'cannot be well read as a chess problem, and the man who tries to read it so is not worthy to read it at all[1].' And so we have in the Prefaces to Hoveden, Benedict of Peterborough, the Itinerarium Ricardi, and Walter of Coventry, those wonderful studies of the characters of Henry II, Richard I, and John, which must always remain as masterpieces of historical portraiture. In the same way the course of history at large is no mere complex of material and mechanical laws; it yields no countenance to that ingenious philosophy which is 'so

[1] Benedict of Peterborough, II. vii.

pt,' as he contemptuously says, 'to show that all things would have been exactly as they are if everything had been diametrically opposite to what it was[1].' 'The ebb nd flow of the life of nations is seen,' he says, 'to depend n higher laws, more general purposes, the guidance of Higher Hand[2].' And so we have those wonderful ummaries which conclude the second and third volumes f his Constitutional History, the finest specimens I know of istorical generalisations controlled by an absolute mastery f all the facts.

In Memoriam W. Stubbs.

§ 3. And here we find the secret of his unfailing hope-ulness. The last words of that same second volume must, I think, have dwelt in the hearts of all who have ever read them; where, after speaking of the luxury, the selfishness, the hardness of the fourteenth century, and the lust, the cruelty, the futility of the fifteenth, he concludes: 'Yet out of it emerges, in spite of all, the truer and brighter day, the season of more general conscious life, higher longings, more forbearing, more sympathetic, purer, riper liberty.' While those who remember the Commemoration Sermon which he preached at the late Queen's first jubilee will know that he brought the same wise spirit of hopefulness to the history of our own day. There was much in the tendencies of modern thought and of modern society which, to a man of his strong convictions as a Christian and a Churchman, was justly repugnant. But in his case 'experience,' and history, the record of experience, had 'worked hope.' Some of us may perhaps remember how in one of his public lectures he himself quoted the Psalmist's words: 'I said, It is mine own infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most Highest.'

[1] Hoveden, II. lxxviii. [2] Const. Hist. ii. 621.

In Memoriam W. Stubbs.

§ 4. It is only of his character as an historian that I have a right to speak to you from this place; but perhaps you will forgive me if, as a Churchman, I just briefly put on record my sense of the loss which the Church of England has suffered in his death; though only the rulers of the Church can fully estimate the value to the Church in these anxious days of that ripe judgement, based on so unique a mastery of the history both of Church and State. We should be false to his own wise spirit of sober hopefulness if we did not trust that others may be raised up in turn to take his place.

[illegible] these few words of introduction, I turn to the [illegible] bject of these present lectures.

LECTURE I

THE SOURCES

§ 5. When the electors to the Ford Lectureship did me the great honour of offering me the lectureship, coupled with the informal suggestion that the present set of lectures might appropriately be devoted to some subject connected with King Alfred, I warned them, in the letter in which I accepted both the offer and the suggestion, that it was unlikely that on such a well-worked period of English history I should be able to offer anything very new or original. That warning I must now repeat to you. If in the course of our labours I can remove some of the difficulties and confusions which have gathered round the subject, and put in a clearer light some points which have been imperfectly apprehended, that will be all that I can aspire to. For the rest I must be content to put in my own words, and arrange in my own way, what has been previously written by others or by myself; and these lectures may rank as Prolegomena, in the sense in which the late Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, remarked that Dean Alford seemed to have used that word in his edition of the Greek Testament, viz. 'things that have been said before.'

Character of the present lectures.

§ 6. But if I cannot tell you much that is very new, I hope that what I shall tell you may be approximately true. I shall not tell you, as a recent writer has done, that 'by his invention of the shires [Alfred] anticipated the principles of the County Council legislation of ten

Prevalence of uncritical statements about Alfred.

centuries later[1].' For, in the first place, Alfred did not 'invent the shires'; and secondly, if I may quote a letter of my friend the Rev. C. S. Taylor, whose papers on Anglo-Saxon topography and archaeology[2] are well known to and appreciated by historical students, it 'is surely a mistake to make Alfred, as some folks seem to do, into a kind of ninth century incarnation of a combined School Board and County Council.' Yes, it is surely a mistake; and no less surely is it a mistake to make him into a nineteenth century radical with a touch of the nonconformist conscience[3]; or a Broad-Churchman with agnostic proclivities[4]. Nor shall I, with another recent writer, revive old Dr. Whitaker's theory that St. Neot was an elder brother of Alfred, identical with the somewhat shadowy Athelstan who was under-king of Kent at any rate from 841 to 851[5]. For, firstly, it is very doubtful whether Athelstan was really Alfred's brother, and not rather his uncle[6]; and secondly, as we shall see later on, St. Neot is an even more shadowy person than the under-king with whom Dr. Whitaker and Mr. Edward Conybeare would identify him; so shadowy indeed, as almost to justify an attitude of

[1] Alfred the Great, by Warwick H. Draper, with a Preface by the Lord Bishop of Hereford, p. 12.

[2] Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society.

[3] Mr. Macfadyen's Work seems to me a little tinged with this view; Alfred the West Saxon, by Dugald Macfadyen, cf. especially pp. 161 ff.

[4] This seems to be the Bishop of Bristol's view: Alfred the Great, containing chapters on his Life and Times, . . . edited by Alfred Bowker, pp. 107-112. I refer to this work in future as 'Essays.'

[5] Alfred in the Chroniclers, by Edward Conybeare, pp. 17, 27, 36. Pauli had already protested against this view, König Ælfred, p. 209.

[6] See Saxon Chronicle, ii. 75, 76. Two charters, Birch, Nos. 445, 446; K. C. D. Nos. 256, 1047, cited by Pauli, u. s. p. 53, support the view that Athelstan was the son of Æthelwulf; but, though they are not asterisked by Kemble, I doubt their genuineness.

scepticism towards him as complete as that which Betsy Prig ultimately came to adopt towards the oft-quoted Mrs. Harris:—'I don't believe there never was no such person.' I shall not repeat William of Malmesbury's confusion of John the Old Saxon with John Scotus Erigena[1], and of Sighelm, Alfred's messenger, with Sighelm, bishop of Sherborne in the following century[2]; or Henry of Huntingdon's assertion[3] that Æthelwulf before his accession was bishop of Winchester. I shall not speak of an '*Earl* of Berkshire' in the ninth century, nor tell you that Alfred's Jewel is in the Bodleian[4], or that 'the Danes made their first appearance on these shores in 832[5].' Nor shall I tell you that 'Alfred supplied chapter-headings and prefixed tables of contents to each of his authors, an improvement hitherto unheard of in literary work, which, simple as it seems now to us, betokened in its first conception no small literary genius[6]'; for I happen to have had better opportunities than most people of knowing

[1] The tradition about Erigena has been investigated by Huber, Johann Scotus Erigena, . . . München, 1861, pp. 108 ff., who rightly regards it as baseless. Yet it still hovers about; e. g. Draper, pp. 48, 49; Macfadyen, pp. 47-49. The Bishop of Bristol seems to me a little inconsistent, Essays, pp. 107 ff. Huber himself u. s. makes the extraordinary statement that the Preface to Alfred's version of the Pastoral Care is not extant. As it had been printed at least ten times before Huber's book appeared, he might have known of its existence. On Erigena there is an interesting letter by William of Malmesbury, printed in Stubbs' edition, I. xliii ff.

[2] Essays, pp. 96, 165.

[3] Ed. Arnold, p. 145; Mr. Macfadyen cites the statement from Hoveden, without definitely accepting or rejecting it, p. 4. This is a nice instance of the growth of legend. In William of Malmesbury, G. P. pp. 160, 161, Æthelwulf before his accession is a subdeacon; in H. H. he becomes a bishop; finally Harding's rhyming chronicle makes him a cardinal, cited by Pauli, König Ælfred, p. 54. Pity that no one had the courage to make him Pope!

[4] Essays, pp. 83, 89.

[5] ibid., p. 11.

[6] Conybeare, p. 58.

that, in the case of Bede's Ecclesiastical History, the chapter-headings were there long before Alfred undertook the work of translation. The same is true of Pope Gregory's Dialogues, and of his Pastoral Care. The only works to which the above remarks could apply would be the Boethius and the Orosius translations; and even there we cannot be sure that the Latin MSS. used by Alfred had no chapter-headings; certainly the St. Gallen and Donaueschingen MSS. of Orosius have capitula[1], though, owing to the free way in which Alfred dealt with the Orosius, the Latin and Anglo-Saxon capitula do not correspond very closely. And the same is true of some Boethius MSS.[2] It is in truth a little disheartening to have all these old confusions and myths trotted out once more at this time of day as if they were genuine history. The fact is that there has been, if I may borrow a phrase from the Stock Exchange, a 'boom' in things Alfredian lately; and the literary speculator has rushed in to make his profit. Along with a few persons who are real authorities on the subjects with which they deal, eminent men in other departments of literature and life are engaged to play the parts which the ducal chairman and the aristocratic director play in the floatation of a company. They may not know very much about the business in hand, but their names look well on a prospectus. The result is not very creditable to English scholarship.

English learning non-professional.

§ 7. I would not be understood as wishing to confine the writing of English history to a small body of experts. It is one of the great characteristics of English learning that it has never been the monopoly of a professional or professorial caste, as in Germany, but has been con-

[1] For the St. Gallen MS. of Orosius, cf. Zangemeister's edition (Teubner), pp. 302 ff. For the Donaueschingen MS. cf. Schilling, Ælfred's angelsächsische Bearbeitung der Weltgeschichte des Orosius (1886).

[2] See Schepss, Archiv für 's Studium der neueren Sprachen, xciv. 156.

tributed to by men of every, and of no profession. To this fact it owes many of its best qualities—its sanity and common sense, its freedom from fads and far-fetched fancies, its freshness and contact with reality—qualities in which German learning, in spite of its extraordinary depth and solidity, is sometimes conspicuously wanting.

Qualities required for writing English history.

Still the fact remains, that to write on any period of early English history requires something more than the power of construing the Latin Chroniclers in the light of classical Latin, and of spelling out the Saxon Chronicle with the aid of a translation [1]. It needs some knowledge of the general lie of English history, and of the main line of development of English institutions; it needs some grasp of the relations of England to the Continent during the period in question, some power of weighing and comparing different kinds of historical evidence, some acquaintance with the existing literature on the subject [2]. It must be confessed that in many of the recent writings on King Alfred we look for these requirements in vain.

Need for a critical survey of the sources.

§ 8. But, seeing that so many uncritical statements on the subject of King Alfred are abroad, it is all the more imperative that we should begin our work with a critical survey of the materials at our disposal. We shall find them in many respects disappointingly scanty and incomplete. But we must look that fact full in the face, and must not allow ourselves to supply the defects of the

[1] On p. 129 Mr. Conybeare suggests an emendation of the Chronicle which shows that he has not mastered the Saxon declension of adjectives. In the same passage of the Chronicle, Mr. Draper confuses Legaceaster (Chester) with Legraceaster (Leicester), p. 16.

[2] Mr. Conybeare's knowledge of the sources of English history seems to stop with the Monumenta Historica Britannica, 1848. He never even mentions the Rolls Series. He says, e. g., that the Liber de Hyda 'has never been printed in full,' p. 216. It was edited for the R. S. by Mr. Edward Edwards in 1866; cf. also pp. 120, 144, 161, 173, 177.

evidence by the luxuriance of a riotous imagination. The growth of legend is largely due to the unwillingness of men to acquiesce in inevitable ignorance, especially in the case of historical characters like Alfred, whom we rightly desire to honour and to love.

Alfred's own works.

§ 9. The first place in our list of authorities for the life of Alfred must be given to his own literary works. It is true that the evidence which they furnish is mostly indirect, but it is, for that very reason, all the more secure. It might be thought that the fact that these works consist almost entirely of translations would prevent them from throwing much light on the life and character of their author. In reality the contrary is the truth.

Their evidence largely indirect;

It was very acutely remarked by Jaffé[1] that if, as Ranke alleged, the fact that Einhard's Life of Charles the Great is obviously modelled on Suetonius' Life of Augustus detracts somewhat from its value as an original portrait, on the other hand the careful way in which Einhard alters those phrases of his model which were not strictly applicable to his own hero, brings out many a fine shade in Charles' character of which we should otherwise have been ignorant. In the same way, the manner in which Alfred deals with the works which he translated reveals as much of his mind as an original work could do. And this is not merely the case with works like the Orosius, the Boethius, and the Soliloquies of St. Augustine, in which he allowed himself a large freedom in the way of adaptation and addition. Even in the Cura Pastoralis, in which he keeps extremely close to his original, there are little touches which seem to give us glimpses into the king's inmost soul[2].

[1] Cited by Ebert, Literatur des Mittelalters im Abendlande, ii. 96.

[2] In regard to the Orosius, Schilling's dissertation, cited above, brings this out very well. See below, §§ 99-103.

but also direct.

And sometimes the evidence is not indirect but direct. The well-known and oft-quoted Preface to the Cura Pastoralis is an historical document of the first importance; and, as a revelation of the author's mind, it holds, as Professor Earle has said [1], the first place. Next to this would come the Preface to his Laws, which, for the purposes of this section, may be included among his literary works, and the mutilated preface to the translation of the Soliloquies of St. Augustine. On all these literary works I shall have much to say later on [2]; I only mention them here in their character of historical authorities.

The Saxon Chronicle.

§ 10. The next place in our list of authorities belongs on every ground to the Saxon Chronicle. Of the relation of Alfred to the Chronicle I may also have something to say subsequently [3]. But I have elsewhere [4] given my reasons for believing that the idea of a national chronicle, as opposed to local annals, was due to the inspiration of Alfred, and was carried out under his supervision; and I have said that 'I can well fancy that he may have dictated some of the later annals which describe his own wars.' For the former view the high authority of the late bishop of Oxford [5] may be quoted, while as to the second point Professor Earle writes [6]: 'I never can read the annals of 893–897 without seeming to hear the voice of King Alfred.' My friend Sir Henry Howorth indeed has a very low opinion of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle; and as regards the early part of the Chronicle I am entirely at one with Sir Henry Howorth. I have more than once [7] recorded my conviction of the futility of the attempts of Dr. Guest, Mr. Freeman, and Mr. Green, to base an historical account

[1] Essays, p. 187.
[2] Lectures v, vi.
[3] § 93, below.
[4] Saxon Chronicle, II. civ.
[5] Hoveden, I. xc.
[6] Essays, p. 202.
[7] Bede, ii. 28; Saxon Chron. II. cxii.

of the Saxon Conquest of Britain on the unsubstantial dreamwork of traditions embodied in the earlier entries of the Chronicle. But Sir Henry Howorth seems to me to carry his scepticism down to an unduly late period. Anyhow, for the period covered by the public activity of Alfred, 868–901, the Chronicle is as nearly contemporary with the events which it records as any written history is likely to be.

Meagreness of the Chronicle.

But granting that the Chronicle is, for this period, trustworthy as far as it goes; it must be confessed that it is often disappointingly meagre. Of the thirty-four years 868–901, three are entirely vacant[1]. Eight have merely brief entries of a line or two recording the movements of the Danish army or *here*; and of these eight entries the last three have nothing to do with England, being concerned with the doings of the *here* on the Continent[2]. Two other very brief entries deal with the sending of couriers to Rome, and with certain obits[3]. The date of Alfred's death is barely (and probably wrongly) recorded[4]; not a word as to its place or circumstances. And there is a singular dearth of any note of panegyric like that which meets us in the records, meagre as they are, of the reigns of Athelstan, Edmund, and Edgar[5]. In regard to the doings of Alfred this may be due to the influence of Alfred himself; but on the occasion of his death one might have expected, if not the worthy tributes which Ethelwerd and Florence insert at that point[6], at least some recognition of the work which he did. But there is nothing beyond the rather cold statement that 'he was king over the whole Anglekin, except that part which was

[1] 892, 899, 900.

[2] 869, 872, 873, 879, 880, 881, 883, 884.

[3] 889, 898.

[4] At 901.

[5] Cf. Ethelred's Laws, viii. 43: 'uton niman us to bysnan . . . Æðelstan 7 Eadmund 7 Eadgar,' Schmid, p. 248.

[6] See § 118 below.

under the power of the Danes.' One would fain hope that this reticence was due to the feeling so finely expressed by Hallam where he speaks of Sir Thomas More as one 'whose name can ask no epithet[1].' But I do not think it was; and I rather doubt whether Alfred's greatness was fully appreciated in his own day, except by one or two of those in his immediate neighbourhood.

Charters not numerous.

§ 11. In charters, which often supplement so usefully the deficiencies of formal histories, the reign of Alfred is far from rich. The time, indeed, was not favourable to the preservation of documents. Of the destruction of title deeds owing to the troubles of the time we have a striking and pathetic instance[2]:—Burgred, king of Mercia, had, for a consideration, granted land to a man named Cered, with remainder to his wife after his death. In course of time Cered died, and his widow Werthryth desired to go to Rome, and to dispose of the land to her husband's kinsman, Cuthwulf. The charter of the original grant to Cered had however been carried off by the Danes; and Werthryth consequently could not prove her title. She accordingly appeared before a Mercian Witenagemót held under Æthelred, Alfred's son-in-law, as ealdorman of Mercia, and made oath to this effect. Whereupon Æthelred and the Witan allowed a new charter to be made out securing the land to Cuthwulf.

And the strong-handed took advantage of this confusion to annex the property of their neighbours. Thus in 896 Æthelred of Mercia, with Alfred's permission, held a Witenagemót at Gloucester, in order 'to right many men both clerical and lay in respect of lands and other things [wrongfully] withheld from them'; a measure no doubt necessitated by the great campaign of 892–895. Here

[1] Const. Hist. i. 28 (ed. 1854).
[2] Birch, No. 537; K. C. D. No. 304.

Werferth, bishop of Worcester, complained that he had been robbed of woods at Woodchester, which had belonged to his see ever since the days of Æthelbald of Mercia[1]. If this was the experience of a powerful bishop, a special friend of the king himself, we may imagine the dangers to which lesser men were exposed. Fortunately among the documents which have been preserved is Alfred's own will, a most interesting relic, on which something will be said later[2].

Asser's work.

§ 12. We come now to what is the greatest *crux* in our whole subject, viz. the so-called life of Alfred which bears the name of Asser. It is obvious that if this work is genuine, it is an historical authority of the highest interest and importance. On the other hand, it must be confessed that there are features in it which do excite suspicion. Apart from difficulties of detail, some of which will come up for subsequent consideration, the general form of the work is most extraordinary, and high authorities have pronounced that, in its present shape, it cannot possibly be original[3]. The work is made up, as most students know, of at least two distinct elements. There is a series of annals extending from 851 to 887 inclusive, which are for the most part parallel to the corresponding annals of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. I deliberately choose a neutral phrase 'parallel to,' as I do not wish, at this stage, to prejudge the question whether the Latin or the Saxon annals are the more original. Into this series of annals are inserted, at various points, sections of biographical matter, of which the earliest refer to Æthelwulf and Æthelbald, one refers to Æthelred, and the remainder to Alfred. In some cases these biographical sections are introduced by editorial

Suspicious points.

The work consists of two parts, (*a*) annalistic,

(*b*) biographical.

[1] Birch, No. 574; K. C. D. No. 1074; cf. Green, C. E., p. 133.

[2] See below, §§ 63, 64, 82.

[3] e.g. Ebert, u. s. iii. 250; Pauli, u. s. p. 4.

head-links (if I may borrow a word from the Chaucerian specialists), consisting as a rule of very florid and elaborate metaphors [1]. But the way in which these biographical sections are inserted is so inconsequent and inartistic, that one is sometimes almost inclined to think that the compiler, while keeping his annals (as he could hardly help doing) in chronological order, cut up his biographical matter into strips, put the strips into a hat, and then took them out in any order which chance might dictate; much as a famous Oxford parody supposed the names of successful candidates in certain pass examinations to be determined [2]. It is true that in Florence of Worcester the biographical matter identical with that in Asser is woven much more skilfully into the chronological framework of the story; but, after careful consideration, I do not think that this implies that Florence's Asser was any better arranged than our own. I attribute the changes to Florence's own skill and judgement; and Florence had more of both than some of his modern critics are willing to allow.

Crude arrangement.

§ 13. Another general ground of suspicion is, if I may so say, psychological; and I may illustrate what I mean by a little personal reminiscence. Some few years ago I was dining in a college not my own, where one of the junior fellows told us a somewhat startling tale, prefacing it with the remark that the incident was unquestionably true, as it had happened to himself. 'Ah,' said the senior fellow, with the frankness which is one of the privileges of seniority, 'whenever a man begins a story in that way, I always know that some bigger lie than usual is going to follow.' Now it is at least curious that our author so

Excessive self-assertion of the author.

[1] 473 C [15], 484 B [39], 485 A [41]; cf. 491 E [56]. For Asser I give references to M. H. B., adding the pages of Wise's edition in brackets.

[2] Echoes from the Oxford Magazine, p. 29.

constantly lays stress on the fact that he had himself witnessed some of the most striking of the things which he relates, or at least had heard them from those who had seen them. Thus he had frequently ('saepissime') witnessed Alfred's skill in hunting[1]; he had himself seen the little book containing the daily offices and Psalms and prayers which Alfred always carried about with him[2]; he had with 'his very own eyes' often seen Alfred's maternal grandmother, Eadburh[3]; 'with his very own eyes' again he had seen the solitary thorn which marked the site of the battle of Ashdown[4]; he had himself surveyed the site of the fort of Cynwit, and verified its capacities for defence[5]. He gives us to understand that he, with others, had witnessed Alfred's mysterious attacks of illness[6]; that he had not only seen, but read the letters which Alfred received from the patriarch of Jerusalem[7]; that he had seen in Athelney Monastery the young Dane whom Alfred was educating there in the monastic life[8]. So he had heard from various persons different opinions as to the relative guilt of the parties in the alleged rebellion of Æthelbald[9]; he had conversed with many who had seen Offa's daughter Eadburh, the Jezebel of Wessex history, in her dishonoured and mendicant old age at Pavia[10]; while the story of her crimes in Wessex, which deprived all her successors of the title of queen, he had heard from Alfred himself[11]. He had heard from eye-witnesses how Æthelred at Ashdown refused to engage till mass was finished[12], and of the military skill of Abbot John the Old Saxon from those who knew him[13]. Now in all these things there is nothing

[1] 474 A [16].
[2] 474 B [17].
[3] 475 B [19].
[4] 477 A [23].
[5] 481 C [32].
[6] 484 C [40].
[7] 492 D [58].
[8] 494 A [61].
[9] 470 D [8].
[10] 472 B [12].
[11] 471 C [10].
[12] 476 C [22].
[13] 494 D [63].

impossible, or even improbable. It is only the constant asseveration which excites suspicion.

Frankish element in Asser; no ground for suspicion.

§ 14. One general objection which has sometimes been brought against our author is, I am convinced, without foundation:—I mean the presence in him of a certain Frankish element. He uses certain Frankish words, *vassallus*, *indiculus* (a letter; both these words puzzled the scribes a good deal), *comes* (in the sense of ealdorman), *senior* (a lord, seigneur), and possibly others[1]. So too the story how Eadburh 'put her foot in it,' if I may use the phrase, with Charles the Great[2], and of her subsequent fate, evidently reflects the gossip of the Carolingian Courts. It is possible that the story of Æthelbald's incestuous marriage[3] comes from the same source; as, with the exception of Asser, the only contemporary authorities in which it is found are Frankish[4]; so too, perhaps, the judgement on Arnulf's conduct in deposing Charles the Fat[5], and the more correct form Carloman, as against the Carl of the Chronicle[6]. But when we consider that two at least of Alfred's principal literary and educational coadjutors, Grimbald and John the Old Saxon, came from different parts of the Carolingian empire, that Æthelwulf married a Frankish wife, stayed some time at the Frankish Court[7], and had, as the epistles of Lupus of Ferrières

[1] Vasallus, 480 B, 481 D [30, 33]; senior, 471 A, B [9, 10], cf. 494 E [64]; indiculus, 487 E *bis* [48]; comes (= ealdorman), 469 B, D, 470 A, D, 476 A, B, 473 B *bis*, 491 B [5, 6–8, 14, 21 *bis*, 55]. Comes is also used of the Danish jarls, 476 A–477 B [21–23]. For Frankish use of vasallus see S. C. H. i. 205; for senior, ib. 193.

[2] 471 E [11]; the circumstances of the anecdote are possible. Charles the Great's last wife Liutgarde died in 800. His sons Charles and Pippin seem never to have married. Beorhtric died in 802.

[3] 472 D [13].

[4] See Chronicle, ii. 80, 81. Prudentius and Hincmar are strictly contemporary.

[5] 491 A [54].

[6] 483 D [38].

[7] 470 C [8]; Chron. 855.

show, a Frankish secretary[1], that some of these words occur in English charters[2], where likewise they probably bear witness to the influence of Frankish scribes, we shall see that there were plenty of channels through which these Frankish elements might find their way into the biography of an English king. Moreover, if we should come to the conclusion that the book is mediately or immediately the work of Asser, we may be inclined to connect this element in it with a statement quoted by Leland from a lost life of Grimbald[3], that Asser was one of the ambassadors deputed to bring Grimbald to England[4]. The description of Paris also looks as if it might rest on personal knowledge[5].

Detailed objections; the Diocese of Exeter.

§ 15. Of the objections in detail which have been brought against our author, the most important perhaps relates to his statement that Alfred gave him 'Exeter with the diocese belonging to it both in Cornwall and Saxony,' i. e. Wessex[6]. Mr. Wright[7] thought that this was conclusive evidence that the work was later than the transference of the united see of Cornwall and Devonshire to

[1] Writing to Æthelwulf Lupus says: 'uestrum in Dei cultu feruorem ex Felice didici, qui epistolarum uestrarum officio fungebatur,' Migne, Pat. Lat. cxix. col. 459. Writing to Felix himself, he says that he had known him formerly in the monastery of Fara [Faremoûtier-en-Brie, see Bede, ii. 148], which seems to show that Felix was a Frank, ib. col. 462. The object of these letters was to get the pious Æthelwulf to subscribe to roofing the monastery of Ferrières with lead.

[2] e. g. for vasallus cf. Pauli, König Ælfred, pp. 12, 13; S. C. H. i. 156, and the charters there cited of the ninth and tenth centuries; for comes = ealdorman, ib. 158, 159.

[3] Cited in Dict. Nat. Biog. s. v. Grimbald.

[4] 'Legatos ultra mare . . . direxit,' 487 B [46]. Cf. the letter of Fulk of Rheims to Alfred, Wise, p. 128 (if this is genuine, see § 88 below).

[5] 489 B [51], an addition to the Chron.

[6] 'Dedit mihi Exanceastre, cum omni parochia quae ad se pertinebat in Saxonia et Cornubia,' 489 A [51]. On the meaning of Saxonia see § 30 below.

[7] T. Wright, Biographia Britannica Literaria, Anglo-Saxon Period (1842), pp. 405 ff.

Exeter, under Edward the Confessor. I shall show presently that there is evidence, both external and internal, for the existence of our Asser about 975. Meanwhile, I would point out that under the year 875 the Welsh Annals record the drowning of Dungarth, king of Cornwall [1], though it gives one a little start to realise that there were kings in Cornwall as late as the last quarter of the ninth century [2]; and we know from the Chronicle that in 877 Alfred recovered Exeter from the Danes. Now the state of affairs in South Wales which Asser represents [3] as determining him, at any rate in part, to accept Alfred's invitation, in the hope of securing his protection for St. David's, clearly refers to a period 877 × 885. Rotri Mawr is obviously dead, as his sons only are spoken of, and Rotri Mawr was slain in 877; while Howel, son of Rhys, king of Glewissig, is spoken of as alive; and he is probably the Howel who died at Rome in 885 [4], having gone there, it is likely, in expiation of a crime, of which the record is preserved in the Book of Llandaff [5]. It seems to me not unlikely that in view of the events of 875 and 877, Alfred may have wished to place the districts round Exeter under episcopal supervision, without necessarily intending to create a definite diocese, and may have thought a Celtic-speaking prelate likely to be more effective than an Englishman [6]; for at this time the Bristol Channel was not either physically or linguistically a serious barrier between the Celts on either side of it.

Whether Asser was already a bishop when he first came When did

[1] Annales Cambriae, and Brut y Tywysogion, sub anno. (I shall cite the latter work as Brut.)

[2] MS. D of the Chron. mentions a king of the West Welsh (i. e. Cornwall) as late as 926. See Chron. II. viii.

[3] 488 A-C [49 f.].

[4] Ann. Cambr. and Brut., sub anno.

[5] Ed. J. Gwenogfryn Evans, pp. 212, 213.

[6] Cf. Lingard, Anglo-Saxon Church, ii. 384 (ed. 1858).

Asser become a bishop?

to Alfred is difficult to determine. He is often spoken of as bishop of St. David's. Novis, or Nobis, bishop, or, as Asser in the passage referred to above patriotically calls him, archbishop of St. David's, died, according to the Welsh Annals, in 873, after a rule of thirty-three years[1]. His immediate successor was Llunwerth or Llwmbert[2]; but when the latter died I have not succeeded in satisfying myself[3].

Mention of Asser in the Cura Pastoralis.

Confirmation of the grant of Exeter to Asser is sometimes sought in the fact that Alfred, in the Preface to the Cura Pastoralis, speaks of Asser as '*my* bishop,' at a time when Asser cannot have held his later diocese of Sherborne, as one of the copies of Alfred's Cura Pastoralis was actually addressed to Wulfsige, Asser's predecessor in that see. But if Asser was bishop of St. David's when he came to Alfred, I should feel myself precluded from using this argument, for I could not regard it as impossible that Alfred should speak of Asser as 'my bishop' in respect of his Welsh bishopric, seeing that Asser expressly says that Hemeid, king of Dyfed, had commended himself to Alfred; or he might be called 'my bishop' in regard to the position which he held in Alfred's service[4].

Argument

§ 16. Another objection has been based on the passage

[1] Ann. Cambr. and Brut, s. aa. 840, 873; cf. Ang. Sac. ii. 648. The Brut calls him 'Meuruc escob bonhedic,' i. e. 'M. a noble bishop.' The origin of this curious mistake is as follows. The Ann. Cambr. at 873 say 'Nobis episcopus et Meuruc moritur.' The compiler of the Brut misread this as 'Nobilis episcopus Meuruc moritur.'

[2] Ann. Cambr. and Brut. 874.

[3] A Lumberth, bishop of Menevia, dies in 944, Ann. Cambr., or 942, Brut; but if this is the same person it would give him a tenure of seventy years.

[4] My friend Bodley's Librarian has kindly called my attention to an interesting inscription found in St. Lawrence's Church at St. Helier's, Jersey, about ten years ago, which he thinks confirms the idea of the existence of a see at Exeter in early times. The interpretation of the inscription seems to me, however, too uncertain to justify me in making use of it. Lingard, u. s. suggests that by the grant of Exeter, &c., Asser received the western portion of the diocese of

in which Asser relates how, at the close of his first visit to Alfred, he promised to return in six months' time, and give a definite answer to the king's proposals; but on his way home, he says, 'I was seized in the city of Winchester by a troublesome fever, in which I lay for a year and a week'; until Alfred sent letters to inquire why he had not kept his promise[1]. Now it has been argued that it is quite impossible that Asser should have been for over a year at Winchester without Alfred knowing about it. On the other hand, my late friend, Mr. Park Harrison, who, in spite of his advanced age, kept up his interest in these matters to the very end, called on me only a few weeks before his death, and argued that this same passage showed that Alfred could have had but little to do with Winchester, and therefore it was an impertinence of Winchester to attempt to monopolise the millenary celebration. As a matter of fact both arguments are baseless, and rest on a mistranslation. For in the passage cited, the words 'in which' (in qua), refer not to the city of Winchester, but to the fever. It is quite evident, I think, from the context that though it may have been at Winchester that Asser was attacked by the fever, yet he managed somehow to reach St. David's, and that it was there that Alfred's letters reached him.

from the mention of Asser's illness.

§ 17. But before we can judge fairly of the work before us, we must try to do something to rescue the text from the very parlous condition in which it has come down to us. Indeed, with the exception of Ethelwerd's Chronicle,

Corruption of the text of Asser,

Sherborne, and that on the death of Wulfsige he succeeded to the whole.

[1] 'Ad patriam remeauimus. Sed cum ab eo discesseramus in Wintonia ciuitate febris infesta me arripuit; in qua sedulo per duodecim menses et unam hebdomada die noctuque . . . laboraui,' 487 D [48]. A medical friend, to whom I showed this passage, thinks that this prolonged febrile condition was probably due to gastritis.

hardly any work connected with Early English history has been textually so unfortunate as Asser. The only known manuscript of any antiquity perished almost entirely in the great Cottonian fire of 1731; the two existing manuscripts are paper copies of the sixteenth century. For our knowledge of the ancient Cottonian MS. we are dependent mainly on Wise's edition of 1722; an excellent work for the time at which it was produced, but that it is not scrupulously accurate, according to modern notions, is proved by the fact that, whereas the facsimile given by Wise himself of the beginning of the MS. writes the name of Alfred's birthplace, Uuanating, the text prints it Wanading. Moreover, the work has been shamefully tampered with by editors. Apart from longer interpolations, of which I shall speak presently, numberless smaller additions have been introduced into the text from the so-called Annals of Asser or of St. Neot [1], a compilation of the eleventh or twelfth century [2], largely based it is true on Asser for the period 851–887, and therefore available, within proper limits, like the works of other authors who have made use of Asser, for purposes of textual criticism; but not to be used, as has been done, for the wholesale depravation of the text. Even the editors of the Monumenta Historica Britannica were content to place these additions in brackets, instead of removing them altogether. Consequently they are often quoted by modern writers as if they were part of the original Asser.

largely due to editors.

Of writers who have made use of Asser the most valuable, for our purposes, is Florence of Worcester. Very often he furnishes us with what is evidently the true reading [3], in one case at least a passage of some length can be

Florence of Worcester's use of Asser.

[1] Chronicle, II. ciii. f.

[2] Theopold, Kritische Untersuchungen, p. 32.

[3] e. g. 'insiliariis' for 'insidiariis,' 470 D [9].

recovered from his pages, which has been dropped out of our present text of Asser merely owing to homoioteleuton[1]. But even Florence must be used with caution for textual purposes. For just as his greater skill in composition led him (as we have seen[2]) to rearrange the materials with which Asser furnished him, so his better taste and greater command of Latin led him to revise and prune the language of his author. Moreover, in certain cases, Florence has corrected and supplemented Asser by the direct use of the Saxon Chronicle[3]. It must not therefore always be assumed that because Florence's reading is better than Asser's, it is therefore more original. Conversely, though rarely, Asser enables us to correct the text of Florence[4].

It is very curious that though Florence shows, by substituting the name Asser for the pronoun of the first person wherever it occurs, that he accepted Asser's authorship of the work, he should place Asser's death in 883, while continuing to use his narrative for four years longer.

Of the use of Asser by Simeon of Durham I shall have something to say presently[5].

§ 18. Of the longer interpolations alluded to above, the first that must go is, of course, the famous passage about the University of Oxford[6]. This passage is a fine illustration

The Oxford interpolation.

[1] 477 B [24], Flor. i. 85: ['Pagani uictoria potiuntur. Rursus, duobus euolutis mensibus, rex Ætheredus et frater eius Ælfredus cum Paganis, qui se in duas diuiserant turmas, apud Meretun pugnantes, diu uictores existunt, aduersariis omnibus in fugam uersis; sed illis in proelium redeuntibus, multi ex his et ex illis corruunt, et] Pagani uictoriam accipientes loco funeris dominantur.' The passage within the brackets has been lost in our text of Asser, owing to the recurrence of the words 'Pagani uictoria.' Of course Florence may have modified the passage a little, as his manner is.

[2] Above, § 12.

[3] e. g. 877, 884.

[4] Elimauit, Flor. i. 96, eleuauit, Asser; aptius, Flor. i. 83, apertius, Asser. But these are possibly only editorial blunders.

[5] See below, § 25.

[6] 489 C–490 C [52–54].

of the remark, made in this place by my brilliant predecessor, Professor Maitland, that the earliest form of inter-university sports seems to have been a competition in lying. The different phases of that competition have been traced by Mr. James Parker in the first two chapters of his Early History of Oxford [1], and need not detain us here. This passage made its first appearance in the text of Asser under Camden's auspices in 1603. It is much to be regretted that so worthy a name should be connected with so questionable a transaction [2]. I will only add that the use of the one word 'Diuus' instead of 'Sanctus' stamps the passage as a post-renaissance forgery.

The story of the cakes.

§ 19. The next passage which must go is what I must be pardoned for once more [3] calling the silly story about the cakes, and the yet more silly story of the tyranny and callousness of Alfred in the early days of his reign [4]. I hope to show later [5] how utterly inconsistent both these stories are with the genuine history of the reign. Here I need only say that the passage was introduced into our text by Archbishop Parker from the so-called Annals of Asser. It comes ultimately, as stated in the passage itself, from some life of St. Neot which I have not yet succeeded in identifying.

Interpolation at 877

§ 20. I have pointed out in another place [6] that the printed text of Asser contains two accounts of the events of the year 877 [7]. With the exception of a few words relating to the division of Mercia by the Danes, neither of these versions, according to Wise, existed in the oldest MS.

[1] Oxford Historical Society, 1885.

[2] The writer of the article on Camden in the Dict. Nat. Biog. thinks that no special blame attaches to Camden in this matter. But I find it difficult to take his view of the question.

[3] Chronicle, ii. 93.

[4] 480 C–481 B [30–32].

[5] See below, § 46.

[6] Chronicle, ii. 92.

[7] 479 B–480 A [29].

That they were not in Florence's MS. of Asser seems indicated by the fact, that this is one of the annals in which he resorts directly to the Saxon Chronicle. They therefore must also be expunged. I still, however, retain the conviction that the former of the two versions, though not traceable higher than Roger of Wendover in the thirteenth century, is yet perfectly genuine as history, and furnishes a valuable supplement to the account of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.

Earlier interpolations.

§ 21. So far our task has been comparatively simple. We have only had to remove what are obviously later accretions. But the question must now be faced whether the text, as we can prove it to have existed about the year 974, had not already suffered from the hand of the interpolator. From this point of view the most suspicious passage is that which describes the mysterious illness with which Alfred is said to have been attacked at his wedding-feast [1]. This passage has already been severely criticised by Pauli [2], though he has not exhausted all the arguments which can be brought against it.

Story of Alfred's illness.

In the first place it is entirely out of position. Though it refers to Alfred's wedding, which has already been given, probably correctly, under 868, when Alfred was about twenty years old, it is inserted between the events of the year 884 [3] and those of 886. The substance of the story is as follows:—During the marriage festivities Alfred was suddenly attacked by an intolerable pain, from which he has suffered, as those who daily see it know, without intermission, from his twentieth to his fortieth year, or longer. No one could trace its origin. Some thought it was

Analysis.

[1] 484 C–485 C [40–42].

[2] König Ælfred, p. 93.

[3] These events really belong to 885; Asser has omitted the year 884, and so wrongly numbered the succeeding annal. See below, p. 50.

'fascination,' that is, the evil eye, due to the applause of the multitude; others, that it was the envy of the devil; others, some strange kind of fever; others, the disease called 'ficus,' from which he had suffered from his infancy. Once, when he was hunting in Cornwall, he turned aside to pray in a church, where St. Guerier reposes, and now also St. Neot rests, and entreated that some lighter affliction might be substituted for that from which he was suffering; such, however, as would not be externally apparent, like blindness or leprosy, so as to make him contemptible and incapable of discharging his functions. Shortly afterwards he was divinely healed of the 'ficus.' Though, indeed, this very 'ficus' had been given him in answer to prayer; for, in the first flower of his youth, before his marriage, feeling the assaults of carnal desire, he would often rise secretly and visit churches and relics of the saints, praying that God would strengthen him by sending him some infirmity, such, however, as would not make him unworthy or incapable in worldly matters. In answer to this prayer he shortly after received the 'ficus,' from which he suffered for many years, until it was removed by prayer. But alas, on its removal a worse affliction came upon him at his marriage which lasted from his twentieth to his forty-fifth year without intermission; and even if it leaves him for a single hour, the fear and horror of it never quit him, but render him, as he deems, almost useless in things divine and human.

Inconsistencies in the story.

§ 22. It would be difficult to cram more inconsistencies into so short a space. First of all, though the whole point of the story is to show that the wedding-feast disease was different from, and in substitution for, the 'ficus,' the writer ineptly says, that some people thought it was the 'ficus.' This is inserted in order to introduce the statement that Alfred had suffered from the latter disease 'from

infancy.' Then, after telling how it was removed by prayer at the Cornish shrine, he adds that this same disease was sent in answer to prayer, when Alfred was 'in the flower of his youth.' We can hardly place this period earlier than (say) the seventeenth year (a very different thing from infancy); yet he suffered from it 'for many years,' though it had certainly ceased before his marriage in his twentieth year. Again, the condition that the visitation sent should not be disfiguring or incapacitating, is in one place attached to the substituted disease, lower down it is attached to the original trouble. It may be noted that the original disease does fulfil this condition, the substituted one certainly did not, seeing that it rendered Alfred 'almost useless in things divine and human.' And yet a main point of the passage is to illustrate the efficacy of Alfred's prayers. Once more, at the beginning of the passage the substituted disease lasts from Alfred's twentieth year to rather over his fortieth; towards the close it extends from the same date to his forty-fifth year—a very rapid growth. After all this it seems somewhat tame to remark that leprosy and blindness hardly come under one's idea of 'lighter infirmities.'

Possible conflation.

§ 23. In this triumph of ineptitude we may, I think, detect a conflation of two separate traditions; one of which represented Alfred as suffering from infancy from a disease for which in answer to prayer another was substituted; while, according to the other version, the original disease was granted in answer to prayer, and though removed by the same means, only departed to make way for a heavier visitation. But the whole passage is a concoction in the worst hagiological manner, to the source of which we are guided by the mention of St. Neot; for if the legendary Alfred was reformed by the legendary St. Neot, there is no doubt that the historical Alfred has been deformed in

an extraordinary degree by the same agency. And in the present instance we may be glad, I think, to free the historical Alfred from the atmosphere of morbid religiosity which taints this whole passage. It may be noted that Florence, with his usual good sense, has entirely recast the incident, so as to remove most of the absurdities above enumerated. Whether the other two passages, which refer to Alfred's illness [1], are also to be rejected is less easy to say. In one of them the language is very nearly akin to that of the present passage; but that might be due to the compiler having made use of it for his own bad purposes.

Improbability of the story.

Personally, I should not be sorry to let all these passages go; for it seems to me quite inconceivable that Alfred could have accomplished what he did under the hourly pressure of incapacitating disease [2]. Still we must distinguish between what is historically doubtful and what is textually suspicious. There are several things in Asser which, as we shall see, come under the former category, though I could not bring them under the latter.

Incorporation in the text of glosses and marginal notes.

§ 24. One source of the corruption of the text of Asser is, I think, to be found in the fact that words and phrases, which were originally interlinear glosses, have become, as often happens, incorporated with the text [3]. In one case the text of Florence seems to show that the gloss has entirely expelled the original reading, at least in the printed copies [4].

In another instance a marginal note by a later scribe

[1] 474 C [17]; 492 C [58].

[2] Especially if the disease indicated be, as some have thought, epilepsy, with all its deteriorating effects upon the brain; so Green, C. E., p. 101.

[3] Possible instances are: infatigabiliter studiose, 477 E [25]; Florence omits 'studiose'; talento telonio, 484 B [39]; Flor. omits talento; citius plus, 496 D [68]. Not in Flor.

[4] 475 A [19] the printed text has 'expetiuit,' but Flor. and two of the Asser MSS. and ASN have the rare word 'subarrauit,' which occurs in the same sense, 497 B [70].

has got into the text. As this case is of some importance as bearing on the date of the composition, I must ask your particular attention to it. In the description of Alfred's visit to the Cornish shrine, already alluded to, the following sentence occurs:—'Cum . . . ad quandam ecclesiam . . . diuertisset, in qua S. Gueryr requiescit, et nunc etiam S. Neotus ibidem pausat, subleuatus est (erat enim sedulus sanctorum locorum uisitator, . . .) diu in oratione prostratus . . . Domini misericordiam deprecabatur[1],' &c. Here the words 'subleuatus est' can by no possibility be construed, either with what goes before, or with what follows. Some time before I saw the meaning of them, I had underlined these words in my copy of the Monumenta, and noted on the margin 'this seems to make nonsense.' The explanation, I believe, is this:—The original scribe had stated the repose of St. Neot's remains in his Cornish home as a present fact, 'ibidem pausat.' A later scribe notes on the margin 'subleuatus est,' 'he has been taken up'; a word very fitly used of the taking up a saint's body from the grave in order to place it in some elevated shrine, or translate it to some other abode. A subsequent copyist incorporated the note with the text, which is again a frequent phenomenon[2]. Now the translation of St. Neot to the site which bears his name in Huntingdonshire took place about the year 974[3]. The original text of this passage must therefore be

[1] 484 D [40].

[2] The same sort of thing occurs occasionally even in these days of the printing press. In the early copies of a recent Blue Book on China, in the middle of a dispatch of Sir Claude Macdonald, occurred the following sentence: 'not very grammatical, but I suppose we must let Sir Claude Macdonald write as he pleases.' This is obviously the comment of some official, written on the margin of his proof, which escaped deletion when the proof was returned to the printer, and so was incorporated in the text.

[3] See Gorham, History and Antiquities of Eynesbury and St. Neot's, pp. 45 ff. It was in the reign of Edgar, therefore not later than 975. The body was stolen.

anterior to that date; the marginal note, and *a fortiori* the MS. on which our present text of Asser rests, must be subsequent to it. If, as I think, the passage in which these words occur is itself an interpolation, the evidence for the genuine text of Asser is thrown yet further back. However, the argument for *a* text of Asser earlier than 974, derived from the use of the present tense 'pausat,' is quite independent both of my explanation of the words 'subleuatus est,' and of my views as to the spurious character of the passage in which they occur.

LECTURE II

THE SOURCES (*continued*)

§ 25. We saw in the last lecture that there was good evidence for the existence of our text of Asser, apart from the interpolations made by sixteenth and seventeenth century editors, about the year 975. Another argument pointing the same way is derived from the text of Simeon of Durham.

Further evidence for the text of Asser in the tenth century.

In that writer's Historia Regum there exists a double recension of the Annals 848–951, both of which are, for the years 848–888, largely derived, mediately or immediately, from Asser. The explanation of this curious fact given by Mr. Thomas Arnold in his interesting and able introduction to the edition of Simeon in the Rolls Series, is as follows[1]. The earlier recension is the work of a Cuthbertine monk, writing at Chester-le-Street in the second half of the tenth century, who drew largely on Asser for the reign of Alfred, farcing the text however (to use a liturgical term) with many rhetorical flourishes of his own. When Simeon, at the beginning of the twelfth century, embodied the Cuthbertine's work in his Historia Regum, his better taste was revolted by these florid insertions, and he rewrote these annals, not wholly discarding his predecessor's work, but using in addition both the original text of Asser, and also the recent work of Florence of Worcester. (The fact, which can be demonstrated, that Simeon used (1) the original text of Asser; (2) Asser as farced by the

Simeon of Durham.

[1] Vol. II. xv. ff.

Cuthbertine; (3) Asser as revised by Florence, is one which I commend to the notice of students of the synoptic problem [1].) Had Simeon lived to give his work the final revision, he would no doubt have cancelled the earlier version of these annals. As it is, his literary executors embodied both versions; and we may be thankful that they did so, as they have thereby preserved some interesting evidence both literary and historical.

If then Mr. Arnold's theory is correct, as I believe it to be, we have once more evidence of the existence of a text of Asser before the end of the tenth century. This however, though probable, is only a theory. But, even if it be rejected, the argument of the preceding section remains unaffected.

The palaeographical evidence unimportant.

§ 26. Seeing then that we can trace our Asser text back at least as far as the year 974, the palaeographical question as to the date of Wise's MS. becomes comparatively unimportant. And it is well that it is so; for the doctors differ to an extraordinary degree. One morning in Bodley I submitted Wise's facsimile of the beginning of his MS. to three eminent palaeographers of this University. The first was too wary to be caught by my chaff, and refused to give a definite opinion; the second said, 'Not much later than 950'; the third said,

[1] I use S. D.[1] and S. D.[2] to indicate the two recensions. That S. D.[2] used the original text of Asser is shown by his having the false reading 'qui fuit Fingodwulf' in Alfred's pedigree, which S. D.[1] omits and Florence corrects, S. D. ii. 99; that he used S. D.[1] is proved by the fact that under 853 they both have the false reading 'Wada' for the 'Huda' of Asser, Florence, and the Chron., S. D. ii. 71, 102; that he used Florence is proved by the fact that he gives the amount of Æthelwulf's Roman benefaction as 'ccc mancusas denariorum,' ii. 103; where the word 'denariorum' is from Florence, and is not in Asser or S. D.[1] Unfortunately Mr. Arnold is very capricious in his use of large and small type. He prints in large type, as if original to S. D., many passages which come from Florence or Asser.

Well, it isn't later than the twelfth century, but it isn't very much earlier.' I believe the general opinion would place it early in the eleventh century, and this fits in well enough with what I have tried to prove above, that it is copied, mediately or immediately, from a MS. which cannot be later than 974.

Conjectural emendation.

§ 27. Something may be done for the text of Asser by cautious conjectural emendation. There are a certain number of obvious blunders in it due to the carelessness of scribes, the ignorance of editors, possibly even to the mistakes of compositors[1]. Most of these are concerned with minor details. There is one correction however, with which I will trouble you, as it relates to a point of some historical interest; and, moreover, converts into a proof of Asser's accuracy, what might have been used as an argument against him, though I am not aware that it has actually been so used. In the somewhat magniloquent passage in which are described the extensive relations which Alfred cultivated with foreign parts, the following sentence occurs[2]: 'nam etiam de Hiersolyma Abel patriarcha [v. l. patriarchae] epistolas . . . illi directas uidimus et legimus.' The passage as it stands is open to two objections, one historical, the other grammatical. The historical objection is that no one of the name of Abel held the patriarchate of Jerusalem during Alfred's reign; though our historians go on copying and recopying the name without ever dreaming of verifying the point. The grammatical objection is that the passive participle 'directas' cries aloud for a preposition of agency. By the addition of two vowels and the subtraction (if necessary) of another the passage can be brought into harmony both with history and grammar, thus: 'ab Elia patriarcha.' Elias III

Alfred's intercourse with the East.

[1] Thus we should read 'ferri' for 'fieri,' 471 E [11]; 'Stratclutcenses' for 'Stratduttenses' 478 C [27].

[2] 492 D [58].

was patriarch of Jerusalem from 879 to 907[1]. In the earlier of the two versions which occur in Simeon of Durham the word 'Abel' is printed 'a Bel[2].' This does justice to the grammar, but not to the history. In the later version, Simeon himself, following Florence, omits the passage altogether. One would be glad to know whether Florence omitted it because he saw the objections to which it was open.

Evidence of the Leechbook,

I was first put on the track of this correction by the curious passage of the Leechbook printed by Mr. Cockayne in the second volume of his interesting Anglo-Saxon Leechdoms, where the writer, after giving certain medical recipes, says at the end: 'all this my Lord Elias, patriarch of Jerusalem, bade thus say to King Alfred[3].' As the MS. from which this is taken is, according to Mr. Cockayne, of the early part of the tenth century[4], we are brought very near indeed to Alfred's time. Moreover in the Anglo-Saxon Martyrology printed by the same editor in his work called 'The Shrine; a collection of occasional papers on dry subjects,' two Eastern saints, martyred in Persia in 341, SS. Milus and Senneus, are commemorated at November 15[5]. These are found in no Western Calendar, and Mr. Cockayne thinks that the knowledge of them must have come to England through Alfred's intercourse with Elias of Jerusalem. The martyrology, which is unfortunately incomplete, was not improbably drawn up by Alfred's directions, and cannot be later than his reign, as it mentions St. Oswald's body as

and of the Anglo-Saxon Martyrology.

[1] Gams, Series Episcoporum, p. 452. Elias' predecessor was Theodosius, c. 864–879. In the whole list of patriarchs there is no Abel or Bel.

[2] S. D. ii. 89.

[3] 'þis eal hét þus secgean Ælfrede cyninge domne Helias Patriarcha Gerusalem,' ii. 290.

[4] ibid., xxiv. f.

[5] pp. 147, 148; cf. Mas Latrie Trésor de Chronologie, pp. 791 835.

resting at Bardney[1], whence it was translated to Gloucester by Æthelflæd, lady of the Mercians, and her husband Æthelred, not long after Alfred's death[2].

In one instance, I may remark in passing, the editors have altered Asser's text for the worse, what the Germans call 'Verschlimmbesserung.' It is the passage where Athelney monastery is said to be unapproachable 'nisi cauticis, aut etiam per unum pontem[3].' Here 'cauticis' has been altered to 'nauticis.' But 'cautica' is a perfectly good word, and means causeway, *chaussée*[4], a much better sense than any that can be got out of 'nauticis[5].'

§ 28. But even when all has been done that criticism can do for the restoration and purification of the text, the work still remains a puzzle almost insoluble. What can we make out as to the author? It is clear that he was a Celt from South Wales. This is proved partly by his language and terminology, partly by his knowledge of South Welsh affairs. As to the former point, he has the special Celtic use of the terms 'right-hand' and 'left

Evidence of the work as to the author. He was a native of South Wales.

[1] Shrine, u. s. p. 113. Aug. 5.

[2] In 909 according to MS. C of the Chronicle (Mercian Register); in 906 according to MS. D. The notice of St. Winnoc as 'lord of the minster of Wormhoult to the south of the sea,' p. 145, Nov. 6, is also emphasised by Mr. Cockayne as proving that the work is earlier than 900, in which year St. Winnoc's body was translated to Bergues. But this point, if insisted on, would prove the work to be earlier than 846. For in that year St. Winnoc was translated from Wormhoult to St. Omer (*or* Sithiu). The translation to Bergues in 900 was from St. Omer, not from Wormhoult. But an English writer might easily be ignorant of either or both these translations. It is better therefore not to lay stress on this point. See the Life of St. Winnoc in Mabillon, AA. SS. iii. 311, 312 (ed. 1672). An English writer could hardly however have been ignorant of Oswald's translation, if it had taken place.

[3] 493 C [60].

[4] See Ducange, s. v.

[5] Malmesbury says of Athelney: 'ut nullo modo nisi nauigio adiri queat,' G. P. p. 199. But 'nauticis' cannot mean 'boats,' but only 'sailors.'

hand,' to express the ideas of south and north. The Celt always faced the east, and named the quarters of the heaven from that point of view. Thus Chippenham is in the left-hand part of Wiltshire[1]. The author's own home was to the left and west of Severn[2]. The Danes threw up earthworks on the right-hand side of Reading[3]; Sussex is the region of the right-hand Saxons[4]; and, lastly, all the regions of the right-hand part of Britannia belonged to Alfred[5]. This does not, however, exclude the use of the more ordinary words 'meridianus' and 'aquilonaris' for south and north[6].

Ambiguous use of the term *Britannia*.

§ 29. The example last cited brings me to another characteristic of the author's terminology; viz. his ambiguous use of the word *Britannia*, which sometimes means Britain in the ordinary sense[7], but more often means Wales. Historians have gone wrong through ignoring this distinction. Thus Dr. Pauli[8], in the passage just quoted, takes *Britannia* in what is to us the ordinary sense. But that all the southern parts of Britain belonged to Alfred is so obvious as not to be worth saying. That all the southern districts of Wales had submitted to Alfred is a new and most interesting fact. And this clearly is the meaning; for the statement is introductory to that sketch of the troubles in South Wales which explains both why the South Welsh princes commended themselves to Alfred and why the author consented to enter his service. Moreover this use is paralleled again and again in the Book

[1] 480 B [30].
[2] 487 C [47].
[3] 476 A [21].
[4] 487 C [47].
[5] 488 B [49].
[6] aquilonaris, 469 C [5], 474 C [17]; meridianus, 469 C [6], 476 A [21], 477 D [25], 479 A [28], 482 C [35]. East and west are always 'orientalis,' 'occidentalis,' 'occiduus.' There is nothing like the Irish 'airther,' 'iarthar,' 'fore, and 'hinder,' for east and west.
[7] 467 [1], 473 C [15], 479 A [28] 483 B [37]; cf. Britannica insula 483 A [36].
[8] König Ælfred, p. 258.

f Llandaff, a primary South Welsh authority. We find here Asser's very phrase 'dextralis pars Britanniae' several imes repeated[1]. We have the clergy and people, the nhabitants, the churches, the archbishop, the kings and princes, the kingdom, the islands, 'Dextralis Britanniae[2].' To return to Asser:—Æthelwulf reduces 'Britannia' under Burgred of Mercia[3]; Offa's dyke divides Mercia from 'Britannia[4],' and finally Asser himself agrees to spend half his time 'in Britannia' and half with Alfred 'in Saxonia[5].'

Use of the terms *Saxones* and *Saxonia*.

§ 30. This brings me to my next point. For our author, as for all branches of the Celtic race, the Germanic tribes settled in Britain bear the common name of Saxons[6]. So much is this the case that he once writes 'regnum Orientalium Saxonum, quod Saxonice Eastengle dicitur[7].' This is a mere slip, for in other cases he has 'Orientales Angli' quite correctly[8]. But it shows how much more natural the word 'Saxones' was to him than the other. So too their language is 'Saxonica lingua[9],' as opposed to Welsh,

[1] Dextralis [dextera] pars [plaga] Britannie, pp. 161, 169, 212, 223, 237.

[2] Reges et principes [totius regni] D. B. pp. 70, 118; omnes Ecclesiae totius D. B. p. 115; clerus et populus D. B. p. 165; Dubricius archiepiscopus D. B. pp. 163, 192; incolae D. B. p. 230; D. B. insulae, p. 162; cf. p. 269: '[Grifud] rex Britannie, et ut sic dicam totius Gualie'; from which it would seem that 'Britannia' is a narrower term than 'Gualia'; but their exact relation I do not know.

[3] 470 A [7].

[4] 471 D [10].

[5] 487 B, D, 488 A [47–49]; cf. also 496 A, B [49], where Alfred sends alms to the monasteries not only of 'Saxonia' and Mercia, but also to those of 'Britannia,' Cornwall, Gaul, Armorica, Northumbria, and Ireland.

[6] 477 D, 478 A [25], 483 C [37].

[7] 473 C [15]. Ethelwerd is at the opposite pole to Asser in this respect, for he uses Australes *Angli* for Sussex, 510 C, D, and Occidentales *Angli* for Wessex, 509 E, 510 D, 514 D, 515 C, 517 C. We have, however, Saxones Occidentales, 519 A.

[8] 474 C [17], 475 D [20] *bis*, 482 D [35], 483 C, D [37, 38], 484 B [39].

[9] 470 A [7], 485 D [43], 486 E [46], 492 A [56].

which is 'Britannicus sermo[1]'; a place bears one name, 'Saxonice,' 'in English[2],' and another, 'Britannice,' 'in Welsh[3]'; and we hear of the 'Saxon' poems which Alfred loved from his boyhood[4], and of the 'Saxon' books[5], in which they and other English writings were contained. So too the country of these tribes is 'Saxonia[6].' But here it is important to notice the precise limitations under which Asser uses this last term. It is not coextensive with the whole of Germanic Britain. It includes Wessex, Sussex, Kent, Surrey, and Essex. Cornwall is excluded as being Celtic[7]; but Mercia is also excluded[8], and *a fortiori*, though this is not expressly mentioned, East Anglia and Northumbria[9]. In other words it includes that part of the island which, at the death of Egbert, was under the direct rule of Wessex; or, to borrow Bede's useful distinction, it connotes the 'regnum' as opposed to the 'imperium[10]' of the West Saxon house. It is possible that in many cases the term 'Saxones' should be understood with a like limitation, for the Mercii, Northanhymbri, and

Limitation of the term *Saxonia*.

[1] 470 A [7].

[2] 473 C [15], 478 D [27], 479 A [28], 483 B [37], 484 A [38], 487 C [47].

[3] 475 B [19], 478 D [27], 479 A [28], 480 B [30], 481 D [33], 482 C [35].

[4] Saxonica poemata, 473 E [16]; S. carmina, 485 E [43], 486 A [43]. Cf. what is said of Charles the Great, Einhard, c. 29: 'barbara et antiquissima carmina, quibus ueterum regum actus et bella canebantur, scripsit memoriaeque mandauit. Inchoauit et grammaticam patrii sermonis.' Of his son Louis the Pious on the other hand it is said: 'poetica carmina gentilia, quae in iuuentute didicerat, respuit, nec legere, nec audire, nec docere uoluit,' Theganus, Vita Hludouici, c. xx (Pertz, ii).

[5] 474 A [16], 485 E [43], 486 A [43], 497 E [71].

[6] 471 A [9] *ter*, 471 C [10], 487 C [47], 488 A [49].

[7] 'In Saxonia et in Cornubia,' 489 A [51].

[8] 'In omni Saxonia et Mercia, et . . . in . . . Cornubia,' 496 A, B [67].

[9] For cases in which it does include Northumbria see Bede, ii. 368.

[10] See Bede, ii. 43, 86.

Orientales Angli are generally mentioned separately. But I do not think that this limitation can be carried out quite so rigorously, for instance where Asser speaks of the 'Schola Saxonum' at Rome[1], answering to the Angelcynnes scolu' of the Chronicle. In one case he does expressly distinguish 'Angli et Saxones[2].'

Alfred 'king of the Anglo-Saxons.'

§ 31. And in this connexion it is deplorable to remark that for Asser Alfred is always 'king of the Anglo-Saxons[3]'; but then we must remember that Asser never had the advantage of reading Mr. Freeman's history of the Norman Conquest, or of attending the lectures of Professor Napier. But, jesting apart, it is important to note that by the use of this title our author intends to mark a real advance in power and dignity on the part of Alfred as compared with his predecessors, none of whom bears any higher style than that of king of the West Saxons[4], and the change of style is justified by the fact that a large number of Mercian Angles became Alfred's immediate subjects in 878. On the other hand Asser does not exaggerate Alfred's position, as later Chroniclers do, calling him 'monarch of the whole of Britain' and so on[5]. If the heading of the work is genuine, as I am inclined for this very reason to think it is, Alfred is addressed as 'ruler of all the Christians of the isle of Britain[6].' In other words the writer recognises exactly the same limitations to Alfred's power as does the Saxon Chronicle, where it says that, after Alfred's occupation of

[1] 478 B [26], 484 B [39].

[2] 489 C [52]. In the Book of Llandaff we have in one place: 'in confinibus Britannie et *Anglie*,' p. 192. Asser never has Anglia.

[3] 467 *bis* [1, 3], 471 C [10], 473 D [15], 483 A [36], 483 C [37], 484 B, C [39], 489 B [51], 491 B [55].

[4] Beorhtric, 471 D [11]; Æthelwulf, 469 D [6], 470 B [7], 483 E [38]; Æthelbald, 472 D [13]; Æthelberht, 473 C [15]; Æthelred, 475 B [19].

[5] See below, § 49.

[6] 467 [1].

London, all the English kin submitted to him, except what was under the thraldom of the Danes [1].

Other Celtic terms.

Another term of Celtic origin is probably to be found in the unique title of 'secundarius' given by Asser to Alfred during the reign of Æthelred [2]; but of this I shall have more to say in another lecture; while for 'graphium' in the sense of 'donation' or 'written grant,' the only other authority quoted is from the life of a Welsh saint [3].

Celtic use of the term *Germania*.

§ 32. Another trace of Celtic influence is to be found, I believe, in the innocent-looking passage where it is said that in 884 an army of pagans from Germany, 'de Germania,' invaded the Old *or* Continental Saxons [4]. It might be thought that this merely refers to the fact that part, at any rate, of the invading army had wintered at Duisburg on the Rhine [5]. But could they be said to be going *from* Germany when they invaded Saxony? I cannot speak positively as to all the mediaeval uses of the word 'Germania,' but one would think that it must include Saxony [6]. But however this may be, the fact remains that Asser nowhere applies the name 'Germania' to any part of the Carolingian empire. The people of that empire are Franks [7]. Charles the Great [8], Charles the Bald [9], Charles the Fat [10], Louis the Stammerer [11], Louis, king of Northern France [12], are all kings of the Franks. Carloman, king of

[1] Chron. 886; cf. ibid., 901.

[2] 475 A [19], 476 D [22], 477 C [24].

[3] 'In sempiterno graphio,' 470 C [8]; the very same phrase, Cambro-British Saints, p. 100.

[4] 484 A [38]; the true year is 885, v. inf. p. 50.

[5] Dümmler, Gesch. d. Ostfränkischen Reiches, ed. 1. ii. 224.

[6] Bede certainly speaks of Saxons, Angles, Jutes, as being all peoples of Germania, H. E. I. xv. In Alfred's Orosius Germany includes all between the Rhine, the Danube, the Don, and the White Sea.

[7] 483 A [36], 486 B [44].

[8] 477 E [11].

[9] 470 C [8], 472 D [13], 483 E [38].

[10] 491 A [54].

[11] 483 D [38].

[12] ibid.

Aquitaine and Burgundy, is king of the Western Franks[1]. We hear also of the kingdom or region of the Western Franks[2]. The territory included in the empire as a whole is called Francia[3]. The eastern kingdom is Francia Orientalis[4]. The western territory is sometimes called Gallia[5], and its inhabitants are Gauls[6], or of Gallic race[7]. Charles the Fat, before he gained the western kingdom, is king of the Alamanni[8]. I believe that Germania here means Norway, a meaning which, strange as it may seem, it unquestionably has in the Welsh Annals. Thus at 1036 the Brut y Tywysogion calls Canute king of England, Denmark, and Germania, while at 1056 the title king of Germania is given to Harold Hardrada. In other words, the invaders of Saxony, according to Asser, came from Norway, and not from Denmark, which he calls Danubium[9].

Other Celtic characteristics.

Another very obvious characteristic of the writer is his fondness for giving Welsh equivalents for English names of places[10].

May I add without offence that I think another Celtic trait in our author is a certain largeness of statement? Mons. Henri Martin, a great admirer of the Celts, notes as characteristic of them a certain 'rebellion against facts[11]';

[1] 483 D [38].

[2] 484 A [38], 489 B [51].

[3] 483 A [36] *bis*; ibid., C [37] *bis*.

[4] 483 A, B [36, 37]; at the beginning of the annal 886 we should probably read: '[orientalem] regionem fugiens'; Florence has 'orientali Francia relicta,' i. 101. In the division which followed the deposition of Charles the Fat, Arnulf has 'orientales regiones Hreni'; Rudolf, 'internam partem regni' (= þæt middel rice, Chron.); Odo, 'occidentale regnum,' 491 A [54]; cf. Chron. 887 and notes.

[5] 479 A [28], 487 B [46], 498 B [67].

[6] 484 A [39], 486 B [44].

[7] 493 E [61], 494 B [62] *bis*.

[8] 484 A [38].

[9] 473 C [15].

[10] See § 30.

[11] Histoire de France, i. 36: 'leur indomptable personnalité, toujours prête à réagir contre le despotisme du fait,' a passage alluded to by M. Arnold, Celtic Literature, p. 102.

and there are many things in Asser which we can hardly accept as literally true, though, as I have shown already, and shall have to show again, some of the criticisms directed against him rest on misunderstandings of his words.

Knowledge of South Welsh affairs.

§ 33. We have next to consider the author's knowledge of South Welsh affairs. The principal passage is the one already alluded to where Asser describes his motives for entering Alfred's service[1]. He and his friends hoped thereby to check the mischief inflicted on St. David's by Hemeid, king of Dyfed, who had on one occasion expelled Archbishop Novis, Asser's relative, and himself. Alfred was in a position to help, for some time previously all the princes of South Wales had commended themselves to Alfred; Hemeid himself, and Helised ap Teudyr, king of Brecheiniog, owing to the pressure of the sons of Rotri Mawr, king of North Wales; while Howel ap Rhys, king of Glewissig, Brochmail and Fernmail, sons of Mouric, kings of Gwent, took the same step, owing to the pressure of Æthelred of Mercia. Even Anaraut, son of Rotri himself, with his brothers, leaving the friendship of the Northumbrians (by which I take the Northumbrian Danes to be meant) sought the king's friendship; and after being honourably received by him, and made his godson at confirmation, agreed to stand to him in the same relation of subordination as Æthelred did in Mercia, and was dismissed with rich presents—a scene which almost repeats the submission of Guthrum, and incidentally perhaps supports the view that the defect of which Augustine complained in Welsh baptismal practice, was the omission of the rite of confirmation[2]; while the comparison with Æthelred of Mercia illustrates the semi-royal position of Alfred's son-in-law[3] at least as forcibly as it illustrates Anaraut's dependence.

[1] 488 A–C [48–50]. [2] Bede, ii. 75, 76. [3] Chron. ii. 118, 119.

§ 34. Many years ago the late Mr. Bradshaw laid stress on the forms of these Welsh names as showing that Asser could not be a late forgery [1]. This argument becomes of less importance in view of the results we have already arrived at as to the date, and of the fact that names of the same type occur in documents later than the latest date which any reasonable critic could propose for Asser [2]. But the whole passage throws a flood of light on the state of Wales, and its relations to the house of Wessex. We see South Wales forced to submit to Wessex by the joint pressure of North Wales and Mercia; while North Wales, which had remained hostile at any rate up to 880, when a battle was fought which was regarded as avenging the slaughter of Rotri Mawr by the Saxons in 877 [3], ultimately found it to its interest to seek the shelter of the West Saxon overlord. Thus we see actually going on before our eyes the transition from the state of things under Egbert, when the Celtic population joined eagerly with the Scandinavian invaders in the hope of undoing the work of the Saxon Conquest [4], to a state of things in which they combine with their Saxon rivals against the common foe. It seems to me that such a passage, introduced so incidentally and naturally, could only have been written by a contemporary writer. Moreover all the South Welsh princes, with two exceptions, are mentioned in the Book of Llandaff, several of them occur in the Annals. Hemeid of Dyfed, Asser's enemy, died in 892 or 891 [5]. Howel ap

Relations of Wales to Wessex.

[1] Collected Papers, p. 467; I have to thank my friend Mr. F. Jenkinson, Librarian of the sister University, for reminding me of this passage.

[2] e. g. the Book of Llandaff, which is of the twelfth century, though based on older materials; Brochmail, Elised, Mouric, Ris, Rotri, Teudur, will all be found in the Index.

[3] Digal Rotri, 'the avenging of Rotri,' Ann. Cambr. and Brut, sub anno, 880; cf. ibid., 877.

[4] See Chron. 835, and note.

[5] 892 Ann. Cambr.; 891 Brut.

Rhys is probably the Howel who died at Rome in 885[1] whither he had gone, it is not unlikely, in expiation of the crime—a peculiarly foul case of treachery—recited in the Book of Llandaff[2]. His district, Glewissig, is often mentioned in the same authority; it is 'roughly the district between the lower courses of the Usk and Towy[3].' Mouric of Gwent and his sons Brochmail and Fernmail also occur frequently[4]. Mouric is probably the one whose death is recorded in 873[5]. The only prince as to whom I can find nothing is Helised ap Teudyr of Brecheiniog. But there is a Teudyr ab Elised, king of Brecheiniog[6], contemporary with Llunwerth or Llwmbert, the successor of Novis in the see of St. David's, who is not impossibly his father. Of Novis himself I have said enough above (p. 20).

Events of 878.

Another place where the author shows his knowledge of South Welsh affairs is in the interesting addition which he makes to the Chronicle under 878, to the effect that the heathen force which besieged Cynwit on the north coast of Devon, had wintered in Dyfed, and massacred many Christians there[7]. Facts like this explain the change of attitude on the part of the Welsh. South Wales also suffered severely in 895[8].

Question as to unity of authorship.

§ 35. I have so far spoken of 'our author' in the singular. But the question must now be faced: is the work (apart from actual and possible interpolations) the composition of a single hand? When I first took up this

He may be the Himeyt who occurs in No. 2 of the ancient Welsh pedigrees, printed from Harleian MS. 3859, in Y Cymmrodor, ix. 171.

[1] Ann. Cambr., Brut., sub anno.

[2] pp. 212, 213; he is mentioned, ibid, 226-231.

[3] ibid., Index; in Cambro-British Saints, p. 22, the name is derived from an eponymous king Gluigius.

[4] pp. 200, 206, 216, 226, 231-236; cf. Pedigree, No. 29, u. s.

[5] Ann. Cambr., sub anno.

[6] Book of Llandaff, pp. 238. 239.

[7] 481 B [32].

[8] 895 Ann. Cambr.; 894 Brut.

question I rather hoped that the result to be arrived at would be, that the annals were the work of one author, the biographical notes of another, while the florid head-links, of which I spoke before[1], would be the work of the later editor who combined the two documents. This would have been a result dear to the heart of the higher critic. But any such theory, however pretty, will not stand a moment's examination. Allowing for the difference of subject-matter, the same characteristics appear both in the annalistic and biographical sections. Thus of five instances of the Celtic use of left and right instead of north and south, two occur in the annals and three in the biography; 'Britannia,' in the sense of 'Wales,' occurs six times in the biography and once in the annals[2]. So there are some not quite common words and expressions, for which the writer has an evident predilection, which are sprinkled about both parts of the work. The details are too dry for reproduction here, and may be safely relegated to the obscurity of a footnote[3].

[1] Above, § 12.

[2] The special use of the term 'Saxonia' occurs only in the biography; but then there was no great occasion to use it in the annals. Conversely, the seven instances in which Welsh equivalents for Saxon place-names are given occur wholly in the annals. But this also is quite natural. In the annals, as we shall see, the writer was translating; and he added explanations to make his text more intelligible to his Welsh readers. For the same reason, and also because of their greater length, the biographical sections give greater scope for the author's idiosyncrasies both of diction and of style; and therefore they naturally contain a number of peculiarities which cannot be paralleled in the annals.

[3] The biographical sections (B) occupy nearly twice as much space as the annalistic (A). For purposes of statistics it is hard to draw the line exactly between them, because, even in the annals, there are small biographical insertions, and it is difficult to know under which head to class these. The longer anecdotes about Æthelwulf, Æthelbald, and Æthelred I have counted as B. I give a few statistics of the vocabulary. It will be seen that some words of frequent occurrence occur only under one heading, and these taken alone might support the

Peculiar sense of the word *aedificia*.

But one instance is of sufficient general interest to merit discussion. This is the use of the word 'aedificia' in the sense of articles of goldsmiths' work. To this I can produce no parallel from any other writer; but the meaning seems to me practically certain in three instances, and probable in the fourth; and of these four cases one occurs in the annals, and the rest in the biography. The first instance is where Alfred, after Guthrum's baptism, gives him 'multa et optima aedificia [1].' It is clear that Guthrum did not carry away with him edifices, in the ordinary sense of the word. Lappenberg would alter 'aedificia' into 'beneficia [2]'; 'mit vollem Rechte,' says Pauli [3]; but this will hardly do in other cases, as we shall see.

The next instance is where Asser says that Alfred 'by his novel contrivance made "aedificia" more venerable and precious than any of his predecessors [4].' Here the ordinary meaning is just possible, though the epithet 'pretiosiora' and the fact that 'aurifices et artifices' are mentioned just before, point decidedly the other way. The third passage speaks of 'aedificia of gold and silver incomparably wrought under his instructions [5].' Even the most Celtic imagination cannot suppose that Alfred built edifices, in the ordinary sense, of the precious metals, especially as his own royal halls and chambers are expressly stated to have been of stone and wood [6]. The fourth passage tells how Alfred

theory of a double authorship; but I do not think they do. See last note. Adunatus, A^3, B^1; aedificium (in special sense noted in text), A^1, B^3; aliquantulus, A^1, B^1; animose, A^6; belligerare, A^5, B^2; curtum, B^6; incessabiliter, B^3; infatigabiliter, A^2 (the writer is fond of words ending in -bilis, -biliter); licentia (in sense of *leisure*), B^3; more aprino, B^1; more lupino, A^1; more uulpino, A^1; ordinabiliter, B^6; testudo, A^1, B^2; uniuersitatis uia (i.e. death), A^6, B^1; ultramarinus, A^1, B^1; uita praesens, B^{12}.

[1] 482 C [35].

[2] i. 321; E. T. ii. 55.

[3] König Ælfred, p. 141.

[4] 486 A [43].

[5] 492 D [58].

[6] ibid.

had workmen who were skilled 'in omni terreno aedificio[1],' where the meaning is probably the same. The use of the word in so strange a sense in both parts of the work seems to me a strong proof of unity of authorship. The usage, however, becomes a little less strange if we remember how much of the goldsmith's art at that time would go to the making of shrines and reliquaries, which really were 'edifices' in miniature. The two middle passages which speak of Alfred's 'novel contrivance,' and of his personal instructions to his workmen, are of singular interest in connexion with the Alfred Jewel; and the fact that my friend Professor Earle, who has made a special study of that jewel, agrees with my interpretation of these passages, adds greatly to my confidence in advancing it. Alfred's love for this kind of art seems to have been hereditary. William of Malmesbury gives an account of a shrine which Æthelwulf had made to contain the bones of St. Aldhelm. 'The covering is of crystal, whereon the king's name may be read in letters of gold[2].' This exactly answers to the character of the Alfred Jewel.

§ 36. Of Asser's style two prominent characteristics are a fondness for long parentheses[3], and a tiresome trick of

Asser's style.

[1] 495 D [66].

[2] Gesta Pontificum, pp. 389 f.: 'Fastigium cristallinum rex Ethelwulfus apposuit scrinio, in quo nomen eius litteris aureis est legere.' In front were 'ex solido argento iactae imagines,' i. e. statuettes cast in solid silver; at the back 'leuato metallo miracula figurauit,' i. e. scenes representing Aldhelm's miracles. Does 'metallo leuato' mean that they were engraved? or does it indicate 'champlevé' enamel? The latter would be another link with Alfred's Jewel, though the enamel of that is 'cloisonné.' Malmesbury speaks in the present tense, so that the shrine had survived to his time; and he must have seen it almost daily. In the Chron. Monast. Casinensis, under the year 1020 we find mentioned: 'loculus mirificus . . . argento et auro ac gemmis Anglico opere subtiliter ac pulcherrime decoratus,' Pertz, vii. 649; cf. ibid., 712: 'Anglus quidam aurifex.'

[3] e. g. 486 D [45] neque enim . . . administraret; 488 A [49]

repeating a word or phrase, sometimes with a slight variation, at intervals, in some cases longer, in others very short[1]. He certainly would have had no chance with the editor who objected to the quotation 'to the pure all things are pure,' on the ground that it sinned against the rule of the office that the same word must not be repeated within six lines. Occasionally he seems as if he could not get away from a phrase, but clings to it, as a drowning man clings to a plank; and I think that this feature is due, not to any love for these particular words and phrases, but to a poverty of expression like that which causes the repetitions of an unpractised speaker. These characteristics come out most strongly no doubt in the biographical sections, but they are not wholly absent from the others[2].

Relation

§ 37. The next question which must be considered is

qui saepe ... sub ipsis; 492 D [59] ueluti gubernator ... contendit, &c.

[1] Instances of recurrence at longer intervals: 469 A [4] nobilis ingenio, nobilis et genere; 473 D [16] cum nobilitate generis, nobilis mentis ingenium; 474 A [17] crebris querelis, et intimis suspiriis; 486 C [45] querelabatur et assiduo gemebat suspirio; 496 B [67] in quantum infirmitas et possibilitas atque suppetentia permitteret; 497 A [69] in qu. poss. aut supp. immo etiam inf. perm. Instances of recurrence at short intervals: 485 D, E [43] artes quae nobilibus conueniunt, studia qu. nob. conu.; 485 E [43] et maxime Saxonica carmina studiose didicere; 486 A [43] et max. carm. Sax. memoriter discere, et ... studiosissime; 491 C [55] erga studium ... sapientiae uoluntatem, erga st. sap. deuotionem; 492 A, B [57] quamuis dissimili modo (repeated); 493 A, B [59, 60] inani poenitentia ... inanem poenitentiam ... detestabilis poen. ... sera poen.; 494 B, D [62, 63] iudaico more [= like Judas] (repeated); 495 D, E [66] unicuique secundum propriam dignitatem (repeated). In the long passage about Alfred's illness this feature reaches the degree of caricature. If my view is right that that passage is a conflation of two traditions relating to the same events, this characteristic also would be accounted for.

[2] Parentheses: 481 B [32] non enim ... uidimus; 489 B [51] quia illa ciuitas ... parua; 491 A [54] nullus enim ... solus. Repetition: 478 D [27] tutissimo terrarum situ; 481 C [32] locus situ terrarum tutissimus.

the relation of the Latin Annals of Asser to the corresponding passages of the Saxon Chronicle. Sir Henry Howorth indeed expresses roundly his conviction that Asser wrote (if indeed he would not rather say forged) the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle[1]. This I regard as quite inconceivable. Sir James Ramsay, without going so far as this, records that 'several' passages have convinced him that the Latin of Asser is more original than the Saxon of the Chronicle[2]. Unfortunately he does not indicate these passages. My own conviction is unfalteringly the other way. In the first place there is at least one passage in Asser which can only be explained as a mistranslation of the Chronicle. It occurs under 876. Here the Chronicle has a phrase which puzzled all translators of the Chronicle, mediaeval and modern, till it was cleared up by Professor Earle. It runs thus: 'The mounted force (*i.e.* of the Danes) stole away from the fyrd and got into Exeter.' Asser misunderstands this, making it a defeat of a native body of cavalry by the Danes[3]. At 886[4] there seems also to be a mistranslation or misunderstanding, but the text is possibly corrupt, and Florence has not improved it.

of Asser to the Saxon Chronicle.

Mistranslation,

or misunderstanding.

Again, such forms as 'Middel-Seaxum[5],' 'East-Seaxum[6],' 'Suð-Seaxum[7],' 'Eald-Seaxum[8],' which contain the Saxon dative plural surely imply a Saxon original. It may be

'East-Seaxum.'

[1] Ecgberht . . . and his Coins, Numismatic Chronicle, 3rd Series, xx. 66–87. For a copy of this (too) ingenious essay I am indebted to the kindness of Sir Henry himself. His unfavourable view of the Saxon Chronicle is strongly expressed here and elsewhere.

[2] Foundations of England, i. 257.

[3] See Chron. sub anno, and notes.

[4] 'Aut cum Paganis sub captiuitate erant,' 489 C [52].

[5] 469 C [5].

[6] 469 B, C [5] (four times).

[7] 487 C [47]; probably in 473 A [14] Suth-Seaxum should be read for -am.

[8] 484 A [38]. These forms are very common in Ethelwerd, whose work is also based mainly on the Chronicle: 'quod Huiccum nuncupatur,' 509 f.; Dorsetum Dux, 511 B; Defenum Dux, 511 C.

noted too that Asser retains the Saxon name of the river Seine, Signe[1], whereas the more classical Florence translates it into the Latin form, Sequana. Phrases again like 'ipso eodem anno[2]' for 'þy ilcan geare,' and the constantly recurring 'loco funeris dominati sunt[3]' for 'ahton wælstowe geweald,' 'superius' for 'ufor[4]' point the same way.

Omission.

Again, Asser accidentally omits the annal 884, which is a very brief one in the Chronicle. Consequently, he mechanically puts the events of 885 under 884.

Chronology.

Lastly, Steenstrup showed by a comparison of the continental Chronicles that the movements of the Danes from 879 to 897 in the Saxon Chronicle (= 878–896) are probably dated a year too late[5]. This is confirmed by the mention of a solar eclipse under 879 at one o'clock of the day. Now in 878 there was a solar eclipse on October 29, at 1.30 p.m. There was a solar eclipse also in 879, on March 26, but this was at 4 p.m. Asser gives the hour of the eclipse as 'between nones and vespers but nearer to nones[6].' In other words he has altered the hour of the eclipse given by the Chronicle to suit the wrong numbering of the Annal. The force of these arguments taken together seems to me overwhelming.

Asser's additions to the Chronicle.

§ 38. But Asser is not content to be a mere translator. He makes considerable additions to the Chronicle, which vary very much in value. Some are pure rhetoric, others are mere inferences from the words of the Chronicle,

[1] 489 B [51], 490 C [54]; in the latter passage he has also Sigona, which is a sort of compromise.

[2] 469 B [5].

[3] 469 D [6] and *passim*.

[4] 483 A [36], Chron. 881. Florence has 'exercitus saepedictus,' which shows that he misunderstood or misread 'superius' as 'supradictus.' This illustrates the relation of Florence to Asser, as well as that of Asser to the Chron.

[5] See Chron. ii. 95.

[6] 482 C [35].

egitimate enough it may be, but of no higher authority han similar inferences deduced by ourselves. Many consist of interpretations of Saxon names[1], or statements of heir Welsh equivalents[2]. A considerable number are eographical glosses explaining the situation of the places nentioned[3]. These three last classes of additions occur nly in the Annals, and all three seem to point to an interpreter wishing to make his original clearer to his eaders, who are assumed to be unfamiliar with Saxon ames and places. Even the situation of London is carefully explained. But other additions, like the one discussed bove about the wintering of the Danish fleet in Dyfed[4], re of real value, and evidently rest on authentic nformation.

Abrupt termination.

§ 39. The abrupt termination of the work after the year 887 has always been a difficulty. If we could trust the statement that the work was written in Alfred's forty-fifth year, i. e. about 894[5], we might account for this by supposing that the Chronicle, from which the writer borrows so much, had not at that time got much beyond 887. And the work may have been laid aside and never taken up

[1] 469 B [5] Sheppey; 469 C [6] Oakley; 476 C [22] Ashdown; 479 A [28] Exeter; 481 D [33] Selwood.

[2] See above, p. 38, note 3.

[3] 469 B, C [5] Sheppey and London; ib. C, D [6] Surrey, and 'Mediterranei Britones'; 474 C [17] York; 476 A [21] Reading; 477 D [25] Wilton; 478 D [27] Wareham; 479 A [28] Exeter; 480 B [30] Chippenham; 482 C [35] Cirencester; 483 B [37] Rochester.

[4] Above, p. 44. Other good additions will be found under 853, 871. (I do not include under this head the story of Æthelred and his mass.) But the fact that Asser was occasionally able to make authentic additions no more disproves the greater originality of the Chron. than similar additions in Ethelwerd, who, while following in the main the Chron., evidently had other good sources now lost. On the type of Chron. used by Asser, see Chron. II. lxxxiv.

[5] 492 C [58]: 'ad quadragesimum quintum [annum] quem nunc agit.'

again. Unfortunately this date occurs in one of those suspicious passages about Alfred's illness, though not in the one most open to suspicion. Or, again, the work may be mutilated.

Asser to be used with caution;

but there is a genuine nucleus.

§ 40. On the whole, then, Asser is an authority to be used with criticism and caution; partly because we have always to be alive to the possibility of interpolation, partly because the writer's Celtic imagination is apt to run away with him. But that there is a nucleus which is the genuine work of a single writer, a South Walian contemporary of Alfred, I feel tolerably sure, and I know no reason why that South Walian contemporary should not be Asser of Menevia. There is a slight confirmation of this view in the quotation which the writer makes from Gregory's Cura Pastoralis [1], for we know from Alfred's own mouth that Asser was one of those who helped him in the translation of that work. Another coincidence with Alfred's preface to the Cura Pastoralis is to be found in the phrase 'aliquando sensum ex sensu ponens,' which Asser uses in reference to the translation of Gregory's Dialogues [2]. Anyhow, as I have shown [3], the work which bears Asser's name cannot be later than 974, and the attempt to treat it as a forgery of the eleventh or twelfth century must be regarded as having broken down. I may add that I started with a strong prejudice against the authenticity of Asser, so that my conclusions have at any rate been impartially arrived at.

A puzzling work.

§ 41. Still the book remains a puzzle both in form and substance. It was a curious work to offer to Alfred if it contained the scandals about Æthelbald and Judith, and

[1] 496 A [67], from Cura Past. iii. c. 20. [Anglo-Saxon Version, cap. xliv.]

[2] Alfred says that he translated sometimes 'word be worde,' word by word, sometimes 'andgit of andgite,' 'sensum *ex* sensu.' The exact correspondence is curious.

[3] See above, §§ 24, 25.

what we must regard as the idealised description of Alfred's court and administration. I am conscious that I am very far from having solved the problem. I shall be content if I am thought to have contributed something towards a solution, which will perhaps be given before long by Mr. Stevenson. The suggestion of Mr. Macfadyen that the work was drawn up with a view to Alfred's canonisation [1] may be dismissed at once. People are not canonised in their lifetime.

Lives of saints.

§ 42. In one class of historical literature, which often very usefully supplements more formal histories, the reign of Alfred is singularly barren, I mean the lives of saints. We have nothing like the lives of Dunstan, Oswald, and Æthelwold, which give us so much help towards the end of the next century; or like the lives of Wilfrid and Cuthbert at an earlier period. The times, indeed, were not favourable to the development of saintship of the mediaeval pattern. The monasteries, the chief schools of that type of sanctity, suffered more than any other institutions at the hands of the Danes; and the virtues which the age required were of a more active kind than those which went to make up the mediaeval ideal. The title of saint is indeed given by one authority to Werferth, bishop of Worcester; but this rests, as we shall see, on a misconception; though in truth, as Mr. Taylor has remarked, the conduct of Werferth in accepting the see of Worcester in 872, the very year preceding the expulsion of Burgred, king of Mercia, Alfred's brother-in-law, by the Danes, was as heroic as that of any Christian missionary [2].

Lives of St. Neot; their mythical character.

§ 43. The only hagiological literature relating to Alfred's reign consists of the lives of St. Neot. And these are late, and not merely unhistorical, but anti-historical. To

[1] u. s. p. 356.

[2] Rev. C. S. Taylor, The Danes in Gloucestershire, pp. 7 9.

them are due some of the prevalent misconceptions as to Alfred's reign. For this very reason something must be said about them.

Five Lives.

The existing Lives of St. Neot are, as far as I know, five in number, four in Latin, of which three are in prose and one in verse, and one Anglo-Saxon Life. Besides these there is, as we have seen, a fragment of another Latin Life, embodied in the Annals of St. Neot, and thence transferred by Archbishop Parker to the text of Asser[1]. Roger of Wendover's account of St. Neot[2] seems also to be based on some Life different from any of those mentioned above.

The Bodleian Life.

Of the Latin Lives that have come down to us the earliest is that contained in MS. Bodley 379, and printed at the end of Whitaker's Life of St. Neot[3]. It may sufficiently characterise this writer's style to say that he describes Wessex as the country of 'the Anglican Saxons who dwell

The Bollandist Life.

beneath the Zephyr wind[4].' The next Latin Life is that printed by the Bollandists[5] from a MS. formerly belonging to Bec. It bears within itself clear evidence of being later than the Norman Conquest[6]. This is a very pedantic writer. He talks much of form and matter, genus and species[7], 'the dry notions of Logicians,' as one translator of Thomas à Kempis[8] depreciatingly calls them; and is fond of using Greek words like 'anatole,' 'mesembria,'

The Metrical Life.

'dysis[9].' The Metrical Life, printed by Whitaker[10] from a MS. belonging to Magdalen College, Oxford, is clearly based on this, of which also John of Tynemouth's Life[11] is a mere abridgement. The Anglo-Saxon Life (or rather

[1] 480 C–481 B [30–32].
[2] Ed. Coxe, i. 331, 332.
[3] pp. 339 ff.
[4] 'Saxones Anglicos Zephyri sub uento morantes,' p. 350.
[5] AA. SS. July vii. 314 ff.
[6] 'Priusquam Anglia . . . Northmannorum subiugaretur ditioni,' p. 320b.
[7] p. 320a.
[8] Imitatio, i. 3; Eng. Transl. ed. 1863.
[9] p. 320b.
[10] pp. 317 ff.
[11] Whitaker, u. s. p. 367.

Homily) is preserved in a Cottonian MS. (Vesp. D. xiv), whence it was printed by the Rev. G. C. Gorham in his History and Antiquities of Eynesbury and St. Neot's (1824)[1], and more recently by Cockayne[2] and Wülker[3]. As to its date widely different views have been held, based on divergent interpretations of a passage near the end, where the writer contrasts the evils of his own times with the prosperity of Alfred's later years. Sir T. Duffus Hardy thought that this description pointed to the year 986 as the date of composition[4], while Professor Earle would place it in the eleventh or twelfth century[5]. But the mistake of the writer in making Neot contemporary with Ælfheah of Canterbury is absolutely conclusive against the earlier date[6]. Wülker is inclined to attribute it to Ælfric[7]; but this also is unlikely. It is clearly based on earlier Lives, for the expressions occur: 'as books say,' 'it is told in writings,' &c.[8] But I do not think it is directly derived from any of the preceding Lives, and, though not ancient, it may be earlier than any of them. It certainly contains one miracle which is not found in any of the others, a very quaint story (probably a folk-tale) of a fox which stole the Saint's shoe while he was bathing[9]. The Anglo-Saxon Life.

§ 44. These lives cover much the same ground. St. Neot is made the son of Æthelwulf and his wife, granted to their prayers as a reward for their piety[10]. Æthelwulf is represented not incorrectly as king of one of the four English kingdoms, viz. of Wessex with Kent[11], the other Analysis of the Lives.

[1] pp. 256 ff.
[2] In the Shrine, pp. 12 ff.
[3] Anglia, iii. 104 ff.
[4] Catalogue of British History, i. 539.
[5] Two Saxon Chronicles, pp. 351 ff.
[6] See below, p. 56. note 4.
[7] Grundriss . . . der angelsächsischen Litteratur, p. 494.
[8] Gorham, pp. 256, 257.
[9] ibid. 258.
[10] AA. SS. u. s. p. 321[a]; Whitaker, pp. 318, 367.
[11] AA. SS. ibid.; Whitaker, p. 367. The Metrical Life seems to make him king of Kent only. ibid. 318.

three of course being Mercia, East Anglia, and Northumbria. Of the relations of these kingdoms a very ideal sketch is given. As the Metrical Life says, in verses which are as open to criticism on prosodical as they are on historical grounds:—

> 'Suffecit cuique sua pars, nec plura petebat,
> Alter in alterius nil sibi iure petit.
> Pax stabilis, uita concors, discordia nulla;
> Inter eos regnat gratia, liuor abest[1].'

Neot becomes a monk at Glastonbury under Dunstan[2] (who was made abbot of Glastonbury in 946!), and was the special friend of Æthelwold[3] (bishop of Winchester 963!) or of his successor Ælfheah[4]! After this Neot becomes an anchorite in Cornwall, whence he goes to Rome to Pope Marinus[5]. On his return he founds a monastery in Cornwall[6], and now it is that Alfred first hears of him (though according to the pedigree he would be his own brother). Alfred visits him, and Neot rebukes him for his licentiousness and tyranny[7], compelling him, in the words of the Bollandist Life, 'to tremble at the sulphureous flames of Gehenna'; he prophesies Alfred's expulsion

[1] Whitaker, p. 318.

[2] AA. SS. p. 321[b]; Whitaker, pp. 320, 367.

[3] AA. SS. ibid.; Whitaker, p. 321.

[4] Whitaker, p. 343; Gorham, p. 257: 'on Sċĕs Ælfeges dagen þæs halgen biscopes.' The absurdity is hardly less if we suppose the earlier Ælfheah to be meant, 934–951. But the title of 'Saint' seems to show that the later one is intended. If so, the life cannot at any rate be earlier than 1012. And this alone would be fatal to Ælfric's authorship, as he was himself a personal friend of this later Ælfheah, and could not possibly have made such a confusion; cf. Wülker, Grundriss, p. 455.

[5] AA. SS. pp. 322[b], 323[a]; Whitaker, pp. 328, 346, 368; Gorham, p. 257.

[6] AA. SS. p. 323[b]; Whitaker, pp. 329, 346, 368.

[7] AA. SS. p. 325[a]; Whitaker, pp. 333 ff., 347 ff., 370 ff.; Gorham, p. 258.

from the throne, and his ultimate restoration, and then flies [1]. Next comes the invasion of Guthrum. Alfred gives up everything and flies to Athelney; the cakes are duly burnt [2], and then St. Neot appears in a vision and finally leads the English hosts to victory at Ethandun [3].

§ 45. It would not be necessary to quote this precious stuff, even in outline, were it not that people still continue to treat it as more or less historical. I have already adverted to the strange inconsistency of making Alfred first hear of Neot's fame after the latter's return from Rome, although he was his own brother according to the pedigree. This seems to show that the making Neot a son of Æthelwulf was a later development, and not part of the original legend. And, indeed, in the fragment of the Life interpolated in Asser he is no more than Alfred's 'cognatus [4],' which in mediaeval Latin means cousin, or sometimes brother-in-law, like 'cognato' in modern Italian [5]. But if St. Neot ever existed, his connexion with the royal house of Wessex has probably as little basis in fact, as the forged Carolingian pedigree which the later Lives of St. Hubert give to that Saint [6]. Another noteworthy point is that the only pope contemporary with Alfred known to these Lives is Marinus [7], though his obscure pontificate only lasted a little over a year (December, 882, to the beginning of 884 [8]), and was some time posterior to the death of Neot, who is represented

Absurdity of the story.

[1] AA. SS. p. 325[b]; Whitaker, pp. 335, 349, 372; Gorham, pp. 258, 259.

[2] AA. SS. p. 327[a]: 'panes . . . quos nonnulli liridas appellant'; Whitaker, pp. 351 ff.; Gorham, p. 259.

[3] AA. SS. pp. 327[b]–328[b]; Whitaker, pp. 355 ff., 371 ff.; Gorham, p. 260.

[4] 481 A [32].

[5] Bede, ii. 48, 168, 175, 243, 371.

[6] Ebert, u. s. ii. 229.

[7] AA. SS. pp. 323[a], 325[b]; Whitaker, pp. 328, 348, 368, 370; Gorham, p. 258.

[8] Gregorovius, Gesch. der Stadt Rom, iii. 206, 207. The Saxon Chronicle dates his pontificate 883–885, another indication that it is a year in advance of the true chronology.

as dying before the campaign of 878[1]. The reason for this prominence is, of course, to be found in the privileges which this pope was said to have granted, at Alfred's request, to the English School at Rome[2], and still more in the story that he had sent a fragment of the true cross to Alfred[3]. I need hardly say that the idea of Alfred's early licentiousness, or of his tyranny at the beginning of his reign, is absolutely inconsistent with authentic history. The year 871, when Wessex was at deathgrips with the foe, was not the time, even if Alfred had been the man for establishing a tyranny. It is pitiable that modern writers should lend even half an ear[4] to these wretched tales, which besmirch the fair fame of our hero king, in order to exalt a phantom saint.

Alfred's withdrawal to Athelney.

§ 46. But perhaps the worst misconception, and the one which has most injuriously affected English history, is that connected with the withdrawal to Athelney. The Lives represent Alfred on the invasion of Guthrum as becoming not merely a helpless, but a cowardly and criminal fugitive. This view is put most strongly in the Saxon Life, which runs as follows[5]: 'Then came Guthrum the heathen king with his cruel host first to the eastern part of Saxland

[1] AA. SS. p. 325[b]; Whitaker, pp. 335, 349, 372; Gorham, p. 259.

[2] Chron. 885.

[3] ibid. 883; omitted in MS. A *only*. According to Malmesbury, Alfred gave this relic to Glastonbury, Antiq. Eccl. Glast. p. 316 (ed. Gale).

[4] Even Mr. W. H. Simcox, English Historical Review, i. 232; on the ground that the evidence is 'earlier than much which we accept.' Even were this so, it does not touch the fact of its being *inconsistent* with authentic records.

[5] 'Com þa Guðrum se hæðene king mid his wælreowen here ærest on east dæle *Sexlandes*... Ða Ælfred king ... þæt ofaxode þæt se here ... wæs ... swa neh *Englelande*, he sone for fyrht fleames cepte, and his cæmpen ealle forlet, and his heretogen, and eall his þeode; ... ferde þa lutigende geond heges and weges, geond wudes and feldes, swa þæt he ... becom to Æðelingege,' Gorham, p. 239; cf. AA. SS. p. 327[a],

(Saxonia) ... When King Alfred ... learnt that the host ... was ... so near England, he straightway for fear took to flight, and forsook all his warriors and his captains and all his people, ... and crept by hedge and lane, through wood and field, till he ... came to Athelney,' where the cakes are burnt. Now there is no doubt that Wessex was thoroughly surprised by the sudden attack of the Danes at mid-winter, after twelfth-night, 878[1]. And it is possible that in this the Danes were hardly 'playing the game.' Military operations were generally suspended in the winter. Chippenham was a 'villa regia' as Asser notes; and it looks as if the Danes, with Boer 'slimness,' had tried to surprise Alfred in his winter home[2]. Happily they failed in this, and, as Pauli has finely said[3], Alfred's cause was not hopeless as long as Alfred was alive. For the moment the struggle was converted into a guerilla war. But this is what authentic history has to say about it: 'Here the host ... stole on Chippenham and surprised Wessex, ... and most of the people they reduced except the King Alfred[4], and he with a little band made his way with difficulty by wood and swamp; ..., and then after Easter he with his little band made a fort at Athelney, and from that fort kept fighting against the foe[5],' until he in his turn surprised the Danes, and forced them to submit. Athelney, in fact, played no small part in the redemption of England.

[1] Pauli thinks that the result was partly due to internal treachery, König Ælfred, p. 123; cf. also Asser, 480 B [30] 'et etiam a Christianis,' &c.

[2] Professor Earle's suggestion, who notes that Alfred's will shows that he had a 'ham' at Chippenham; cf. Asser, 480 B [30].

[3] König Ælfred, p. 117.

[4] 'Butan þam cyninge Ælfrede,' 'diese vier Worte klingen in ihrer trockenen Einfachheit unendlich grossartig,' ibid., 125 note. The same words are used of Hereward, 1071 E, 1072 D; and Pauli has remarked that Alfred's position in Athelney was not unlike Hereward's in Ely, p. 129.

[5] Chron. 878, and notes.

Later Chroniclers; Ethelwerd.

§ 47. Of later Chroniclers, Ethelwerd, at the end of the next century, bases his work mainly on the Chronicle. But, like Asser, he has good additions here and there; and as he was closely connected with the royal house of Wessex, being descended from Æthelred, Alfred's brother, and was also highly placed as an ealdorman in Wessex, he may well have had access to authentic sources of information. Unfortunately there is no one who has worked at Ethelwerd, who will not echo Ranke's sigh: 'wenn er nur verständlich wäre[1]!' 'If only he were intelligible!' The designation which he gives to himself: 'Patricius consul Fabius Quaestor Ethelwerdus' is but too true an index of the puerile pomposity of his style. Something of this unintelligibility is no doubt to be put down to the corruption of the text[2], of which no MS. is known to exist. But if he fails to make us understand his Latin, his blunders in translating the Chronicle show that he had a very imperfect acquaintance with the Saxon language[3]. It is possible that this fact may be due, as Professor York Powell once suggested to me, to his having been brought up on the Continent.

Florence of Worcester.

The careful Florence gives us less help than usual in this reign, because, as we have seen, he borrows so much from Asser. His splendid and inspiring panegyric on Alfred[4] is almost his only serious addition, though a worthy one, to what we learn from Asser and the Chronicle.

Henry of Huntingdon.

Henry of Huntingdon makes no use of Asser, and does little more than reproduce the Chronicle. There is no trace of the use of ancient ballads[5], such as we find in

[1] Weltgeschichte, VI. ii. 44. Ethelwerd in his Preface says: 'dilucidius explicare oportet,' 499 C. If this is his idea of lucidity, what would his obscurity be?

[2] cf. Pauli, u. s. p. 145 note.

[3] On Ethelwerd cf. Chronicle, II. xliv, ci. f., cxxv, 8, 9, 18, 28, 47, 59, 89 f., 174, 178.

[4] sub anno 901.

[5] Pauli thinks he detects traces of a ballad in a passage of Ethel-

other parts of his history; no survival of personal traditions, like the splendid anecdotes of old Siward a century and a half later, one of which is the ultimate source of Shakespeare's glorious lines:—

'Had he his hurts before?'
'Ay, on the front.'
'Why then, God's soldier be he!
Had I as many sons as I have hairs,
I would not wish them to a fairer death.'

One picturesque phrase Huntingdon has, where, describing the sudden swoop of the Danes on Chippenham in January, 878, he says that 'they covered the land like locusts[1].'

Simeon of Durham.

§ 48. Of the double recension of the annals of this reign in Simeon of Durham I have spoken above. In the second one, which is Simeon's own, there is very little which is not derived from Florence, Asser, and the Chronicle, except a few notices of northern affairs, taken mainly from his own history of the Church of Durham. The earlier recension also adds little to our authorities, except the writer's own rhetoric, of which the following specimen from the opening of the battle of Ethandun may suffice[2]:—'When the most limpid ray of the sun arose, the king and all the glory of his people put on their warlike adornments, that is to say, the threefold breastplate of faith, hope, and love of God. They, rising from the ground, boldly challenged the caitifs[3] to the fight, trusting in the clemency of the Creator, secure and fortified as with a rampart by the presence of their king, whose countenance shone like that of a resplendent angel,' with more to the same purpose—

werd, König Ælfred, p. 119 note; but it is difficult to argue from a writer like Ethelwerd.

[1] Ed. Arnold, p. 147; On Henry of Huntingdon, cf. Chron. II. lvii f., 10, 43, 70, 215, 244 f.

[2] ii. 84.

[3] 'Incelebres,' not 'in celebres.'

Legend of St. Cuthbert.

or want of purpose. In these northern accounts St. Cuthbert plays very much the part which St. Neot plays in southern legend, appearing to Alfred in his distress, and promising him victory [1], a trait adopted also by William of Malmesbury [2]. And with this stream of legend Mr. Freeman [3] ingeniously connects the dedication of the parish church [4] of Wells to St. Cuthbert, a very unusual dedication for a south-country church. Moreover, some of these northern accounts prolong the retreat of Alfred in the marshes of Somerset from three months to three years [5]. We are fast entering the world of legend.

William of Malmesbury.

William of Malmesbury uses both Asser and the Chronicle, though he declines 'to unravel separately the inextricable labyrinths of Alfred's labours.' He adds not only the legend of St. Cuthbert, but also the stories of the golden bracelets, and of Alfred visiting the Danish camp disguised as a minstrel [6]; wandering folk-tales which get attached to more than one historical character. There is no reason to believe that Malmesbury had for Alfred's reign any historical authority not open to ourselves, as he unquestionably had for that of Athelstan; unless, indeed, he had seen Alfred's Handbook, of which I shall have more to say later on [7]. He has, however, some very interesting remarks on Alfred's literary works [8].

Knowledge of early English History declines.

§ 49. After William of Malmesbury men ceased to consult, indeed were unable to consult, the authentic sources of English history [9], and there is nothing to check the growth of legend. We get into a world where cakes are freely burnt, where Alfred is sent to Ireland to be cured

[1] S. D. i. 62, 63. 204 ff., 230 ff.; ii. 83, 111.
[2] Gesta Regum, i. 125.
[3] Old English History, p. 130.
[4] Not the cathedral, as I have wrongly said, Chron. II. 94.
[5] S. D. i. 204, 230.
[6] G. R. i. 124–126, 130.
[7] See below, §§ 90, 115.
[8] G. R. i. 132, 133.
[9] See Chronicle, II. cxxvii.

(Irish fashion) of an incurable disease by St. Modwenna [1], where he invents tithings, hundreds and shires [2], translates into Saxon the Martian law, originally drawn up by Martia, a wise British queen [3]. Here, too, Alfred rules as monarch of all Britain [4], appoints 'custodes regni [5],' yet is considerate enough to abstain from all interference with the Church [6]. Here he founds [7], or better still, reforms, the University of Oxford, to which he sends his son Æthelweard [8], and to which, by an improvement on Asser's scheme, he devotes a fixed proportion of his revenues [9]. His supreme effort in his mythical realm is marked by the invention of trial by jury [10], and the hanging of forty-four

[1] 'Incurabili morbo languentem . . . curandum transmisit,' Higden, vi. 318, 356; Lib. de Hyda, p. 26.

[2] W. M. i. 129; Ingulf, p. 28; Bromton, col. 818; W. Thorn, col. 1777 (hundred et *lestes*); Ann. Winton. p. 10; Robert of Gloucester, i. 293; Lib. de Hyda, p. 42.

[3] Geoffrey of Monmouth, iii. 5, 13; Layamon's Brut, i. 269 f.; John of Wallingford, p. 538; Higden, ii. 92 (from Alfred of Beverley). The whole myth is due to a misunderstanding (wilful, probably, in the first instance) of the partial incorporation in Alfred's Laws of the *Mercian* code of Offa.

[4] 'Primus monarcha Anglorum,' Lib. de Hyda, p. 48, which gives a long comment on this text; cf. Ric. de Cirencest. Speculum Hist. i. 45: 'primus . . . monarcha, et ad quem monarchia regni Anglicani totaliter extitit deuoluta.' Ethelwerd, though so much nearer the time, is not guiltless in this matter, saying that Alfred 'obtinuit regnum . . . super prouincias Brittanniae cunctas,' p. 514 C.

[5] Wendover, i. 363.

[6] 'Illam maximam regis credidit dignitatem, nullam in ecclesiis Christi habere potestatem,' Ailred of Rievaulx, ed. Migne, col. 719.

[7] Bromton, col. 814; Rudborne, Ang. Sac. i. 207; Lib. de Hyda, p. 41.

[8] 'Uir literatissimus, et philosophus in uniuersitate Oxenfordensi,' Rudborne, u. s.

[9] Bromton, col. 818: 'tertiam [partem] scholaribus Oxoniae, nouiter congregatis'; so Lib. de Hyda, p. 45.

[10] Rapin (Eng. trans. 1732), i. 95, 160; Carte (ed. 1747), i. 311, 316. The fiction-monger of the Mirror of Justices treats it as already ancient in the time of Alfred. I owe these references to Sir Frederick Pollock.

judges in one year for unjust judgements[1]. I think it must be admitted that these achievements were highly creditable to one who, in the same mythical realm, had shown in his early years such licentiousness and tyranny[2].

Origin of some of the myths.

§ 50. In some cases we can trace how the later myth arose; and this furnishes us with an instructive warning as to the danger of listening to the unsupported statements of later chroniclers, as many modern writers are half inclined to do.

Simeon of Durham.

The following is a good instance:—

The Chronicle under 885 tells how Alfred sent a fleet to East Anglia, which defeated a force of sixteen wiking ships at the mouth of the Stour, but on their way home fell in with a superior force of the enemy, and were totally defeated. In the earlier text of Simeon of Durham an elaborate explanation is given of the cause of this defeat[3]; how the English were surprised, an unarmed multitude, when plunged in lazy sleep; so that to them, says the moralising writer, would apply the proverb: 'many shut their eyes when they ought to see.' Will it be believed that this elaborate tale, with its attendant moral, has all grown out of a false reading in the parallel account of Asser? He says that the English were attacked 'cum inde uictrix classis dormiret,' where 'dormiret' is a corruption of 'domum iret,' the 'hamweard wendon' of the Chronicle[4]. Florence has 'rediret,' whether that be his substitution for 'domum iret,' or his own correction of the obviously nonsensical 'dormiret.' This example is further

[1] Miroir des Justices, pp. 296-298; where the names of the defaulting justices are given, and very marvellous they are. I owe this reference to Draper, p. 35.

[2] See above, §§ 44. 45; cf. also Wallingford, p. 535.

[3] See ii. 87.

[4] cf. S. D.[2] ii. 117: 'dum reuerterentur *domum*'; the difference between 'domüiret' and 'dormiret' would be extremely small.

interesting as showing how early the text of Asser was corrupted. Simeon in his turn is misunderstood by later writers. The Chronicle of Melrose says[1] that in 883 Alfred 'began to inhabit the devastated provinces of Northumbria.' This is a misreading of a passage in Simeon[2], in which the nominative to 'prepared to inhabit' is 'exercitus,' i. e. the Danish army.

Langtoft. Langtoft says that Æthelred died at Driffield, which shows that he first of all confused him with Aldfrid of Northumbria[3], who reigned just two hundred years earlier; he next goes on to confuse him with his own brother Alfred[4]. As he writes Æthelred's name 'Elfred' the confusion of names is not surprising. We are reminded of Fuller's quaint protest against the similar confusion in the case of Ceadda (Chad) and Cedd: 'though it is pleasant for brethren to live together in unity, yet it is not fit by errour that they should be jumbled together in confusion[5].'

Roger of Wendover. Roger of Wendover says that Alfred sent alms to Jerusalem[6]. The thing in itself is not impossible. But the context in which the statement occurs shows that it rests simply on a false reading in two MSS. of the Saxon Chronicle 'Iudea' for 'Indea[7].'

Liber de Hyda. Lastly the Liber de Hyda gives Alfred a pedigree which seems to make him a descendant of Offa of Mercia[8]. If this pedigree was the only one which we possessed, we might rack our brains to discover what the connexion was. But on reference to the authorised West-Saxon pedigree we

[1] Ed. Bannatyne Club, p. 22.

[2] See ii. 114.

[3] 'her Aldfrið ... forðferde ... on Driffelda,' Chron. 705 (Northern recension).

[4] He transfers to Æthelred Asser's description of Alfred's division of his time and revenues, Langtoft, Rolls Ed. i. 312–324.

[5] Church History, Book ii. 83; cited by Raine, Priory of Hexham, i. 22.

[6] See i. 354.

[7] Chron. 883, MSS. B and C.

[8] See pp. 19, 28.

find that the compiler of the Liber de Hyda has simply made a confusion between Offa of Mercia and Eafa, one of the steps in the descent of the royal house of Wessex.

One wonders how many statements, usually accepted as historical, would, if they could be traced to their origin, prove to have no better foundation than these.

Ingulf.

§ 51. Curiously enough, among the statements of later writers, some of those which sound most authentic occur in Ingulf, one of the most notable forgeries of the Middle Ages[1]. It seems to me that the accounts of the ravages of the Danes[2] may rest, at least in their outlines, on genuine local traditions. Other statements, though probably false considered as descriptions of concrete facts, may be true as types of things which must almost certainly have occurred. For instance, when we are told[3] that a monk of Croyland named Tolius, formerly a Mercian soldier of repute, organised military resistance to the Danes, I take the freedom very seriously to doubt the historical existence of any person of that name. But that in the time of their country's need, more than one world-weary warrior may have come forth from their monastic retreats, to lead their countrymen against the foe, just as two centuries earlier Sigbert, ex-king of the East Angles, had been dragged from the cloister to lead his former subjects against the heathen Penda[4], is more than likely. So when we read how Beornred, king of Mercia, took advantage of the confusion caused by the Danish raids to annex monastic estates[5], how, owing to the ravages of the Danes, and the exactions of their puppet king, Ceolwulf, Croyland became

[1] For Mr. Riley's notable exposure of Ingulf, see Archaeological Journal, xix. 32 ff., 114 ff.

[2] Ingulf, pp. 20 ff.

[3] ibid. 20.

[4] Bede, H. E. iii. 18; so John the Old Saxon, abbot of Athelney, was 'bellicosae artis non expers, si in meliori disciplina non studeret,' Asser, 494 D [63].

[5] See p. 25.

so poor that no one could be found to take the monastic vows there [1], we have every disposition to accept the statements.

It is in Ingulf that Alfred is praised for his devotion to St. Neot and *St.* Werferth [2]. It is curious to find the very definite connexion of Alfred with the human friend who helped him so much in his literary and other tasks, converted into the shadowy relation of a votary to a saint.

'A land where all things are forgotten.'

§ 52. Where, on the other hand, this growth of legend does not appear in later chroniclers, we seem to come into 'a land where all things are forgotten.' And it is, I think, unquestionably true, that Alfred's fame was in after times largely obscured by that of Edgar. The connexion of the latter with the monastic revival secured him the homage of monastic historians, and his imperial position appealed more to the imagination of posterity than the weightier achievements of Alfred. And then he was three-quarters of a century nearer to their view. It is not unnatural therefore that the laws and homilies of Æthelred's reign should look back to the reign of Edgar as a golden age [3]; that here in Oxford, in 1018, Canute and his conquered subjects should be reconciled on the basis of Edgar's law [4]. The one exception is the Anglo-Saxon homily on St. Neot, in which the later years of Alfred are regarded as the golden age [5]. The motive of this is too obvious to be dwelt on. But to show how small a space Alfred occupies in some of the later Chronicles, I may point out that in the Annals of Waverley [6] the only thing mentioned about

Alfred eclipsed by Edgar.

Decline of Alfred's fame.

[1] See p. 27.

[2] ibid.

[3] cf. Wulfstan's Homilies, ed. Napier, p. 310; Ælfric, Lives of Saints, pp. 440, 468; and the references to the Laws given, Chron. ii. 164, 165. Edgar indeed was formally enrolled as a confessor, and found a place in the Calendar, see AA. SS. July 8, p. 659.

[4] Chron. 1018, MS. D.

[5] Gorham, p. 260.

[6] Rolls Ed. p. 163.

him is his foundation of the three monasteries of Athelney, Newminster, and Shaftesbury, that in the Annals of Dunstaple[1] the only act recorded of him is the sending of alms to St. Thomas in India; while this is what his reign shrinks to in the pages of Capgrave, the first to apply the English tongue once more to the original writing of history in prose:—

'In this tyme regned Alured in Ynglond, the fourt son of Adelwold. He began to regn in the ȝere of our Lord 872. This man, be the councelle of St. Ned, mad an open Scole of divers sciens at Oxenford. He had many batailes with Danes; and aftir many conflictes in which he had the wers, at the last he overcam hem; and be his trety Godrus (a nominative inferred from Godrum = Guðrum) here king was baptized, and went hom with his puple. XXVIII ȝere he regned, and deied the servaunt of God[2].'

And so through these dim pages the greatest name in English story moves like the shadow cast by some great luminary in eclipse[3].

[1] Rolls Ed. p. 10. [2] Rolls Ed. p. 113.
[3] Chron. II. cxxvii.

LECTURE III

LIFE OF ALFRED PRIOR TO HIS ACCESSION TO THE THRONE

§ 53. THERE has been a good deal of discussion as to the date of Alfred's birth. Asser at the beginning of his work places it in 849. And in the annalistic portions he dates each year, not only by the Incarnation, but by the nativity of Alfred. From 851 to 869 inclusive this latter series (with one exception) is correctly reckoned from Asser's own date 849; from 870 to 876 the dates are reckoned as if from 850; from 878 to 887 they are reckoned as if from 852. In one case, the annal for 853, the resulting year of Alfred's nativity is 843. With this single exception all the other errors are accounted for by the accidental repetition of numbers, combined with the occurrence of blank annals which are not allowed for[1]. I have shown elsewhere how the chronology of the Saxon Chronicle is dislocated in various places by similar causes of a purely mechanical nature[2]. It is idle to build anything on this. Sir James Ramsay indeed seizes on the one eccentric annal 853 as giving the true date of Alfred's

Date of Alfred's birth.

[1] Thus 869 and 870 are *both* given as Alfred's twenty-first year; this throws the Series one wrong up to 876 inclusive. The annal 877, as I have shown, is blank in the genuine text of Asser. Then in 878 not only is this not allowed for, but the number twenty-seventh is repeated from 876. This further increases the error by two, i. e. the total error now amounts to three years; and this error is maintained to the end.

[2] Chronicle, II. xlix, cii-civ, cxvii, 44, 73, 77.

birth[1]. But, to say the least, the doctrine of chances is strongly against this. We cannot indeed account for this date by progressive degeneration, but it is simply one of those scribal errors to which numerals are peculiarly liable[2].

The true date is 848.

The best authority for the date of Alfred's birth has been generally overlooked. This is the genealogical preface prefixed to MS. A of the Chronicle. This is a strictly contemporary document, being drawn up during Alfred's reign, as is proved by the fact that, though it gives Alfred's accession, it does not, as in the case of all preceding kings, give the length of his reign. According to this authority Alfred 'took to the kingdom when there were gone of his age three and twenty winters.' In other words, Alfred was 'turned' twenty-three, as we say, at his accession in 871. This fixes his birth to 848[3]. The place, according to Asser, was Wantage.

Alfred's first visit to Rome.

§ 54. The earliest event recorded in the life of Alfred is his being sent to Rome in 853, when he would be, according to this, five years old. Of the fact there can be no possible doubt. It is not only mentioned by the Chronicle and Asser; but we have the actual letter which Leo IV wrote to Æthelwulf announcing Alfred's safe arrival[4]. Considering the child's tender age, I can hardly think

[1] Foundations of England, i. 247.

[2] Bede, I. lvi.

[3] A yet earlier copy of this document is printed in Sweet's Oldest English Texts, p. 179; another copy occurs in the Cambridge University MS. of the Anglo-Saxon Bede; and a third in a fragment which probably originally belonged to MS. B of the Chronicle; all these MSS. read 'xxiii.' with A; a later copy printed by Professor Napier reads 'xxii.,' this is probably a mere slip, or it may be due to the influence of Asser. See Chronicle, II. xxviii. f., lxxxix. f., 1, 79. In the Hyde Register, pp. 94 ff., is a later copy beginning with Ine and going down to Canute; this omits the passage about Alfred's age.

[4] Cited by Stubbs, W. M. II. xlii. f.

that the object of the journey was educational, as is very commonly supposed; to say nothing of the fact that Rome, at this time, had very little to offer in the way of education, being far outstripped in this respect by the Carolingian schools of Germany and Gaul[1]. The motive was, I think, much more religious than intellectual. I see no reason to doubt Asser's statement that Alfred was, from the very first, a child of singular promise and attractiveness[2]; and his parents, who were both conspicuous for their piety[3], may well have wished to secure for their favourite child[4], in his earliest years, those spiritual advantages which were believed to attend a pilgrimage to Rome, and contact with the visible head of the Church. The passion for pilgrimages and relics was indeed at its height in the ninth century[5]. So far there is no difficulty. The difficulty is as to what took place at Rome. Not only Asser, but the Chronicle, assert that the pope 'hallowed Alfred as king, and took him as his bishop's son.' The latter phrase clearly points to confirmation. We have seen by the case of Anaraut of North Wales, that it was no unusual compliment for one exalted person to act as sponsor to another at his confirmation[6], or, as in the case of Guthrum, at his baptism. And in some cases the confirming

Question of the Roman unction.

[1] On the intellectual poverty of Rome about this time see a very interesting passage in Gregorovius, u. s. iii. 141–149.

[2] 473 D [16].

[3] 'religiosa nimium femina' is Asser's description of his mother, 469 A [4]. Æthelwulf's famous donation, whatever its exact nature, is at any rate proof of his piety and charity; which are not necessarily, as some persons seem to think, marks of a weak intellect. The letters of Lupus of Ferrières, cited above, § 14, are evidence that his liberality was well known on the Continent.

[4] Asser, 473 D [15].

[5] On pilgrimages and the disastrous results which often followed from them, see Gregorovius, ii. 178 ff., iii. 76 ff.; Bede, ii. 281, 282; on the passion for relics, ibid. 158; Gregorovius, iii. 72 ff.; Ebert, ii. 99, 334 ff., iii. 208 ff.

[6] On sponsors at confirmation see Bede, ii. 383.

or baptising prelate acted also as sponsor, as we see in the case of Birinus and Cuthred of Wessex, mentioned in the Chronicle at 639. There is therefore some plausibility in the suggestion, that the unction which formed part of the rite of confirmation was afterwards misinterpreted as a royal anointing. This theory was put forward as early as the seventeenth century, as appears by Sir John Spelman's life of Alfred[1], and has been accepted by many subsequent writers, myself included. I confess it fails to satisfy me now. The statement of the Chronicle seems to me too explicit to be lightly set aside. Dr. Liebermann indeed argues[2] that the Chronicle cannot have been drawn up under Alfred's influence, because of the gross improbability of this very statement. I am inclined to turn the argument round the other way. I think that Alfred must have understood the ceremony to mean something more than confirmation, especially as the two ceremonies, the hallowing as king, and the reception as 'bishop's son,' are in the Chronicle clearly distinguished. In the letter of Leo IV alluded to above the words run thus: 'We have affectionately received your son Erfred . . . and have invested him as a spiritual son with the girdle (or office), insignia, and robes[3] of the consulate, as is the manner of Roman consuls.' It is certain that Clovis wore a diadem after receiving the consular insignia from Constantinople[4]; and in these ceremonial matters the Papacy largely inherited

Something more than confirmation implied.

The consular diadem.

[1] Ed. Hearne, pp. 19 ff.

[2] In a review of vol. ii of my Saxon Chron., in Brandl und Tobler, Archiv für 's Studium der neueren Sprachen, civ. pp. 188 ff.

[3] 'Cingulo, honore, uestimentisque.' *Cingulum* sometimes means 'dignity,' 'office,' v. Ducange, s. v.; and that may be the meaning here.

[4] Waitz, Deutsche Verfassungsgesch. ii. 133, cited by Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 145; the authority is Gregory of Tours: 'in Basilica beati Martini tunica blatea indutus est, et chlamyde, imponens uertici diadema,' ii. 38.

the traditions of the Byzantine Court. If then the imposition of a diadem of some kind on the child's head formed part of the ceremony of the consular investiture, this would come very near to a royal coronation. I am however inclined to go a step further in the way of suggestion. Ailred of Rievaulx indeed, who compares the anointing of David by Samuel, supposes the pope to have been endowed with the gift of prophecy[1]. And a spurious charter[2] represents Alfred as making promises to the pope, as if it was then certain that he would one day become king. But, humanly speaking, it was of course impossible that Alfred's succession to the West Saxon throne should have been foreseen in 853, seeing that he had three brothers living, all older than himself. But is it not possible that he may titularly have held some subordinate royalty conferred on him by his father for this very object? Athelstan, the under-king of Kent, disappears from history after 851. Æthelberht, Alfred's second brother, was appointed

Possibly titular royalty conferred on him.

[1] Ed. Migne, col. 718: 'Leo tempus et aetatem regnandi regiae unctionis sacramento praeueniens, sicut quondam Samuel puerum Dauid, ita eum in regem ... consecrauit.' Later writers made much of this papal unction, saying not merely that Alfred was the first English king anointed by the pope, which is true, but that he was the first English king who was ever anointed and crowned, e. g. Thorn, in Twysden, col. 1777; Rudborne, Ang. Sac. i. 201, 207: 'ab ipso descendit inunctio regum Angliae'; Chron. Robert of Gloucester, p. 388: 'so þat, biuore him, pur king nas þer non'; John de Oxenedes (who puts the papal coronation after Alfred's accession to the throne!), p. 3; Birch, ii. 256: 'Alfredus rex totius Anglie, primus coronatus'; see the figure of Alfred in MS. Cott. Claud. D. vi, given in Draper, p. 130, where the crown and ampulla evidently allude to the Roman unction and coronation. Nicolas Smith, titular bishop of Chalcedon († 1655), says: 'hic solus ex omnibus Angliae regibus Diadema et inaugurationem sumpsit a Romano Pontifice, ut agnoscunt Protestantes,' in Wise's Asser, p. 109. I do not know whether modern Roman controversialists derive any satisfaction from the same reflexion. If so, it would be a pity to deprive them of it.

[2] Birch, No. 493; K. C. D. No. 1057.

to that under-kingdom when Æthelwulf went to Rome in 855[1]. Is it not just possible that in the interval it may have been titularly conferred on Alfred? What emboldens me to make this suggestion is the curiously interesting parallel of Louis the Pious, who, at the age of three, was crowned by Pope Hadrian I in 781 as king of Aquitaine[2]. But if this be thought too bold a theory, then I should fall back on the diadem as one of the consular insignia. When in the course of years Alfred inherited his father's throne, he, and others, may well have seen in the action of him who was 'high priest that same year,' a prophetic significance; just as St. John traces a higher inspiration in words[3], which, in the intention of the speaker, simply laid down the doctrine of political expediency in its most brutal form.

Æthelwulf's visit to Rome.

§ 55. Two years later, in 855, Æthelwulf went to Rome himself[4]. As early as the year of his accession, 839, he had formed the plan, and had sent an embassy to the emperor, Louis the Pious, to prepare the way[5]; and now at last, after sixteen years, he was able to accomplish it. How much the subject filled his thoughts seems to be indicated by the fact that a charter of this year is dated: 'when I set out to go beyond the sea to Rome[6].' He hardly left 'composito regno' as William of Malmesbury states[7], for in 855 the Danes for the second time wintered in the island[8], and a Mercian charter of this very year is

[1] Chron. ii. 82. So the Charter, Birch, No. 467; K. C. D. No. 269; though the Indiction is wrong, and Stubbs gives the date as 853, Const. Hist. i. 142.

[2] Ebert, ii. 111; Weber, Weltgesch. v. 331, 432.

[3] John xi. 49–52.

[4] Chron.; Asser, sub anno.

[5] Prudentius Trecensis, Pertz, i. 433.

[6] Birch, No. 486; K. C. D. No. 276.

[7] 'Romam, composito regno, abiit,' i. 109.

[8] The Chron. says, 'ærest,' 'for the first time,' but an earlier wintering has been mentioned in 851.

lated: 'when the Pagans were in the country of the Wrekin[1]'; though that concerned Mercia more immediately than Wessex. Before leaving England Æthelwulf entrusted his dominions to his two eldest sons in the way in which they were ultimately divided at his death; Æthelbald receiving Wessex, and Æthelberht Kent with its dependencies[2]. The spirit of family partitions, which wrecked the Carolingian empire, threatened the house of Wessex also. Happily the evil consequences were averted, as we shall see[3], by the patriotic unselfishness of the two youngest brothers, Æthelred and Alfred.

He takes Alfred with him.

Æthelwulf took Alfred with him on this journey to Rome. This fact is not mentioned in the Chronicle, and rests only on the authority of Asser[4], and those writers who have copied him. But on the whole the statements are too precise to be set aside, and we may accept Dr. Stubbs' decision: 'there is no possibility that a single visit has been broken into two[5].' That the child returned to England after his visit in 853, and did not wait at Rome till his father came, is proved by the fact that his signature is affixed to the charter of 855, already cited, which Æthelwulf executed when setting out for Rome[6]: and this is better authority than that of the two recensions of Simeon of Durham; which however both state the fact very distinctly[7].

The continental authorities do not mention Alfred; but

[1] Birch, No. 487; K. C. D. No. 277.

[2] Chronicle, ii. 82.

[3] See below, pp. 86, 89.

[4] 470 C [8].

[5] W. M. II. xliii.

[6] See above, p. 74; the other charters cited by Stubbs, loc. cit. are all spurious.

[7] 'Ad patriam atque ad patrem ... direxit,' S. D.[1] ii. 71; 'ad patrem ... remisit,' S. D.[2] ii. 101 (of the pope). Both these versions also, especially the second, clearly distinguish this journey of Alfred's from the one in 853, ii. 103.

Æthelwulf's reception on the Continent.

they tell how honourably the emperor Charles the Bald received Æthelwulf, and escorted him to the borders of his kingdom [1]; while the Roman historian gives lists of the offerings which the pious monarch made at the holy places [2]. Gregorovius indeed says that he came 'to be anointed and crowned by the pope [3].' But he gives no authority, and I do not believe that any exists. Some authorities transfer to this visit the royal unction of Alfred [4], while another places it at Æthelwulf's death, January, 858 [5]. But there is no reason to believe that Alfred remained at Rome after his father left. The object of both versions is to make the story of the unction rather more probable; but both alike are inconsistent with the fact that Leo IV, who is always represented as the anointing pontiff, died July 17, 855 [6].

State of Rome at this time.

§ 56. According to the Chronicle and Asser, Æthelwulf remained a year in Rome, and according to William of Malmesbury he restored the 'Schola Saxonum [7]' or English hostelry there, which is probable enough, as early in Leo's reign it had suffered much from fire [8]. It is worth while

[1] Prudentius Trecensis, Pertz, i. 449.

[2] Liber Pontificalis, ed. Duchesne, ii. 148; Anastasius in Muratori, SS. III. i. 251; on which see Gregorovius, iii. 149 ff.

[3] u. s. iii. 110.

[4] So Wendover, i. 290, 291 (who makes this unction of Alfred as king at his father's request, to the exclusion of his elder brothers, one of the main causes of Æthelbald's revolt); so too a spurious charter, Birch, No. 493; K. C. D. No. 1057.

[5] The eleventh or twelfth cent. Epitome of the Chron. known as MS. F. I may once more protest against the habit of citing this late authority as '*the* Saxon Chronicle,' without qualification. Mr. Conybeare (u. s. p. 16) goes further, and misrepresents even this poor authority: 'according to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle it was on the news of [Æthelbald's] incestuous union reaching Rome that Leo "hallowed Alfred to king."' Æthelbald's marriage is not mentioned in any MS. of the Chronicle, not even in F.

[6] Gregorovius, iii. 112.

[7] Gesta Regum, i. 109, ii. xxxix.

[8] Lib. Pontif. ii. 111; or Muratori, SS. III. i. 233. For an earlier fire in the same quarter see Chron. 816 and notes. On these foreign 'schools' or hostelries at Rome

to take a glance at the state of Rome at this time. Only nine years before, under Sergius II, a Saracen fleet had entered the Tiber and sacked the papal suburb, though they probably did not capture Rome itself. St. Peter's, the centre of Western Christendom, the archive, the museum, the treasury of five centuries of Christian devotion, became their prey. The church of his brother apostle St. Paul, scarcely less rich, shared a like fate[1]. The conquest of Sicily, 827–832, had thrown down the last barrier against Islam[2]. The Mediterranean was indeed fast becoming a Saracenic lake; and the Saracens were, as has been well said[3], to the dwellers on its coasts very much what the Danes and Northmen were to the dwellers on the coasts of Northern Europe, a haunting ever-present dread, which would not let men sleep. Some parts indeed suffered from both plagues alike[4]; and in Spain we find Saracen and Christian combining against the Dane[5], much as we have seen Celt and Saxon combining in England[6]. It was to prevent a repetition of the disaster of 846 that Leo IV, with the help of the emperor Lothair[7], built the fortifications which have ever since given to the papal suburb the name of 'the Leonine city.' These fortifications were solemnly consecrated by the pope just a year before Alfred's former visit, viz. on June 27, 852[8].

The Saracens.

cf. Chron. ii. 69; De' Rossi, Un Tesoro di monete Anglo Sassoni (1884), pp. 6, 7.

[1] Gregorovius, iii. 87 ff. (a fine description); Ranke, Weltgesch. VI. ii. 1. Compare Alcuin's fine lines on the state of Rome at the end of the eighth century:

Roma caput mundi, mundi decus, aurea Roma,
Nunc remanet tantum saeua ruina tibi,

De Clade Lindisfarnensis Monasterii, vv. 37, 38.

[2] Gregorovius, iii. 65, 66; Weber, Weltgesch. v. 186 f.

[3] Conybeare, u. s. p. 15.

[4] Weber, u. s. pp. 465 f., 505 ff. The Monk of St. Gallen actually *identifies* the Saracens and Northmen, see Ebert, u. s. iii. 220.

[5] Weber, u. s. pp. 192, 193.

[6] See above, § 34.

[7] Ranke, u. s.

[8] Gregorovius, u. s. pp. 97 ff.

Æthelwulf's second marriage.

§ 57. It was on his way home in 856 that Æthelwulf and, presumably, Alfred also, stayed once more at the court of Charles the Bald; and here at Verberie on October 1 the elderly Æthelwulf was married to the emperor's daughter Judith, a child of twelve or thirteen [1]. The motive of this ill-assorted match is thought to have been to cement an alliance between the two monarchs against the wikings, who were the common foes of both. If this was its object, it was a conspicuous failure. As far as I can read the history of the succeeding years, whenever the wikings were defeated on the Continent they threw themselves on England, and conversely [2]. So that the success of one kingdom was the disaster of the other. There is no trace of any joint action beneficial to both. And indeed Charles the Bald, a typical Frenchman in many respects, intellectually clever, but caring only for the outward pomp and circumstance of empire, without the strength of character to grasp and hold the reality of power [3], was hardly the man to carry out a consistent policy.

Æthelwulf's return.

'And afterwards he came home to his people, and they were fain thereof,' says the Chronicle; using, in regard to Æthelwulf's return, almost the same simple and expressive words which it uses afterwards to describe the joy of the people when Alfred emerged from his retreat at Athelney. This seems to me to give the lie direct to Asser's story [4]—in itself most suspicious—that Æthelwulf on his arrival was greeted by a conspiracy of his eldest son Æthelbald, Ealhstan, bishop of Sherborne, and Eanwulf, ealdorman of Somerset, to exclude him from the throne, and that Æthelwulf, sooner than allow a civil war, consented to

Alleged conspiracy against him.

[1] Chron. 855 and notes.
[2] cf. Ranke, u. s. VI. ii. 40 ff.
[3] ibid. VI. i. 207, 208; Weber, u. s. p. 553.
[4] 470 D–471 C [8–10].

accept the subordinate kingdom of Kent, &c., leaving Wessex to the rebellious son. We have seen that Æthelwulf, on his departure, had divided his kingdoms between his two eldest sons, and it is possible that Æthelbald was less willing than Æthelberht to resign the delegated power. The joy at Æthelwulf's return may point to trouble in his absence; and the same may be hinted at where it is said of Æthelberht, that he reigned 'in all good quietness and peace[1].' This cannot refer to exemption from Danish attacks, for it was in his reign that Winchester, the capital of Wessex, was captured[2]. One is almost tempted to think that the writer, struck, as everyone must be struck[3], with the parallel between Æthelwulf and Louis the Pious, wished to create an English counterpart to the Lügenfeld, or Field of Lies, where Louis was betrayed into the hands of his rebellious sons[4] (June 30, 833). Asser's quaint characterisation of an atrocious conspiracy as a 'misfortune' (infortunium), reminds one of Gibbon's immortal description in the autobiography of the gentleman who 'was always talking about his faults, which he called his misfortunes.' Here, too, I seem to see traces of the conflation of two different traditions[5], which might point to the possibility of interpolation. But even if the story be all Asser's own, we must remember that he was writing at least thirty-eight years after the event; and surely we in Oxford know that a legend may grow up in a shorter time than that.

[1] Chron. 860 A.

[2] ibid.

[3] e. g. Pauli, u. s. p. 51; S. C. H. i. 204.

[4] Ranke, u. s. VI. i. 57 ff.; Weber, u. s. pp. 460, 461.

[5] At the beginning of the story the conspirators plot 'ne unquam Æthelwulf rex *a Roma reuertens* iterum in regnum reciperetur,' i. e. the conspiracy is hatched while Æthelwulf is still at Rome; at the end the story of Eadburh seems to imply that it was the marriage with Judith which provoked the conspiracy.

Question of Judith's marriage with Æthelbald.

§ 58. If Judith's marriage to her step-son Æthelbald rested only on the authority of this early part of Asser[1], I should reject it with equal decision; and with the same sort of inclination to regard it as a fabricated pendant to the second marriage of Louis the Pious to her grandmother, the elder Judith, which caused so much dissension in the Carolingian empire[2], and was freely labelled by its opponents as 'incestuous,' because the parties to it were said to be within the prohibited degrees[3]. But the marriage of Judith to Æthelbald is vouched for by strictly contemporary continental authorities[4], one of them being Hincmar, the prelate who blessed the ceremony of her coronation[5], so that it is hard to set it aside. And yet it is hard to accept it. One of the few charters of Æthelbald's reign[6] bears as its first three signatures, 'Eðebald rex, Iudith regina, Swithun episcopus.' Did Swithun condone a flagrant case of incest, or does 'regina' only mean queen-dowager? Once more: is it not just possible that the whole story may have grown out of a confusion of Æthelbald with Eadbald, the son of Æthelberht of Kent, whose incestuous marriage with his step-mother is mentioned by Bede[7]? The difference between Eadbald and Æthelbald would not

[1] 472 D [13].

[2] Ranke, u. s. c. 2. Weber, u. s. pp. 450 ff.

[3] 'renuntia . . . incesto . . . matrimonio; quia ista Iudith . . . proximo tibi affinis est sanguine,' W. M. Gesta Pont. p. 13.

[4] See Chron. ii. 80, 81.

[5] Prudentius Trecensis, Pertz, i. 450. If his words are to be taken strictly it would seem that Æthelwulf placed the crown on the head of his child-bride. (The marriage benediction of Judith is in Bouquet, vii. 621, 622, and is rather a satire on her subsequent history.) So Charles the Great crowned Louis the Pious when he associated him with himself in the imperial power, Sept. 813. Had this precedent been followed, the relations of Papacy and Empire might have been very different, Gregorovius, u. s. pp. 18, 19; Weber, u. s. p. 424.

[6] Birch, No. 495; K. C. D. No. 1058.

[7] H. E. ii. 5.

be very serious, especially to continental ears and pens. Anyhow, we shall hardly acquiesce in the verdict of a later continental chronicler: 'nor did the king's crime seem grievous to the English, to whom the worship of God was much unknown[1].'

§ 59. Apart from his signatures to charters[2], there is no mention of Alfred in our authorities after his second return from Rome till he takes his place upon the stage of history by the side of his brother Æthelred. But no account of Alfred's early years could be regarded as complete which did not include a discussion of the famous story about his learning to read. I venture to think that a good many unnecessary difficulties have been made about the matter.

Story of Alfred learning to read.

The common view may be expressed in the quaint words of Robert of Gloucester's rhyming Chronicle[3]:—

'Clerc he was god ynow, and yut, as me telþ me,
He was more þan ten yer old, ar he couþe is a be ce.'

The original source of all this is of course the well-known passage of Asser[4], where it is said that Alfred 'remained illiterate' up to his twelfth year or more, though he learned many Saxon poems by heart. Then, after an intervening sentence on his skill as a hunter, comes the pretty story of the book of Saxon poems which he won by learning to read it to his mother. Here there are several points to be noticed. In the first place I believe that 'illiteratus permansit' means nothing more than that he was ignorant of Latin. If we consider that Latin was at this time the universal vehicle of culture in Western Europe, that 'legere'

Illiteratus = ignorant of Latin.

[1] Iohannes Longus, Pertz, xxv. 768.

[2] The genuine charters signed by Alfred prior to his own accession are, Birch, Nos. 467, 486, 502, 506, 515, 520, 522; K. C. D. Nos. 269, 276, 285, 287, 293, 1061, 298.

[3] Rolls Ed. i. 393.

[4] 743 D–744 B [15, 16].

is constantly used, and notably in Asser [1], of reading Latin; that all through the Middle Ages the decision 'legit ut clericus,' which entitled an accused person to benefit of clergy, meant that he could read Latin, this interpretation will seem quite natural. Nor does the contrasted statement that Alfred had picked up many Saxon poems by heart oblige us to believe that he could not read his own language in his thirteenth year. Asser is not so logical in his use of conjunctions; and besides this, many, perhaps most, Saxon poems could be acquired in no other way; since they only existed in oral tradition. Alfred's thirteenth year, according to Asser's date for his birth, would point to 861. If we remember that we have Alfred's own statement that only ten years later, at his accession in 871, there was scarcely a priest south of the Humber who knew any Latin [2], we shall easily see that Alfred would have little opportunity of making good the defects of his early education on this side before he came to the throne; and the complaints which Asser puts in his mouth, that when he had leisure to learn, he could find no one to teach him, though rhetorical in form, are true enough in fact [3].

Chronology of the inci-

§ 60. Secondly, I can see nothing in the passage which obliges us to put the incident of the poetry book in Alfred's

[1] e. g. 487 B [46], 491 B [55], 492 A [56]. In one place, 485 D [43], it is used of reading both Latin and Saxon; only in one passage is it used of Saxon alone, 474 B [16]. Green, C. E. p. 158, rightly understands it in this sense.

[2] Preface to Cura Pastoralis; cf. Asser: 'illo tempore lectores boni in toto regno Occidentalium Saxonum non erant,' 474 B [17]. Here 'lectores' means teachers of *Latin*. Florence substitutes 'grammatici.' Ælfric, writing towards the end of the next century of his own youth, says: 'a mass-priest who was my master could to some extent (*be dæle*, partly) understand Latin,' Pref. to Heptateuch; and speaking of his own day he adds: 'unlearned priests, if they understand just a little of Latin books, forthwith think themselves splendid teachers,' ibid. p. 2.

[3] 474 B, C [17], 486 C [45].

irteenth year. It is true that Asser introduces it with n 'ergo.' But when we have once grasped the thoroughly imless way in which Asser sprinkles his conjunctions bout, we shall not be inclined to lay much stress on this. nd, if we are to construe so strictly, the 'ergo' couples he incident, not to the statement of Alfred's want of terature, but to the sentence about his skill in hunting[1]. he incident may belong therefore to any period anterior o Alfred's second visit to Rome in 855. This at once ets rid of all the chronological difficulties which have been volved from the passage.

dent of the poetry book.

Nor is it necessarily implied that the reading of the oetry book was Alfred's first essay in reading. It is nly said that he went to a master and learnt to read that articular book. But a child would need help in mastering new work, even if he could read to some extent before.

Other misconceptions refuted.

Again, the suggestion of Pauli[2] and others that even in his case Alfred was merely taught to say the poems by eart, and then repeated them to his mother, is based simply on a piece of bad scholarship. Because in the modern languages recitation means repeating by heart, it does not follow that that is the meaning of the Latin word. 'Recitare' means 'to read aloud'; it occurs no less than seven times in Asser, and that is the meaning of the word n every case[3].

Once more, the mother mentioned in the story is un-

The mother

[1] Alfred's love of hunting comes out in one or two passages in his writings, e. g. Bede, i. 1 ad fin., where Ireland is said to be 'mære on huntunge heorta 7 rana,' ed. Miller, p. 30; cf. Boethius, xxxii. 3, ed. Sedgefield, p. 73.

[2] König Ælfred, p. 68; so Green, H. E. p. 100.

[3] 474 B [16], 486 A [43], 487 A [46], 488 D [50] *ter*, 491 C [55]. To learn by heart is 'memoriter retinere,' 'memoriter discere,' 473 E [16], 486 A [43]. But apart from any question of the meaning of 'recitare,' Asser says distinctly in this case: 'magistrum adiit et *legit*, quo *lecto* matri retulit et recitauit.'

in the story is Osburh.

questionably Alfred's own mother Osburh. That he should ever have spoken to Asser of Judith, who was only some four years older than himself, with all her doubtful after-history, as his mother, is, as Dr. Stubbs says[1], absolutely inconceivable.

Theory of Osburh's divorce refuted.

Lastly, an emphatic protest must be entered against the abominable theory put forward by Wright[2] and Lappenberg[3], and accepted by Freeman[4], without a shred of evidence, that Æthelwulf had divorced his noble wife Osburh—noble in character as in race—as Asser excellently says[5], in order to marry the child Judith. The object of the theory is to get over the supposed chronological difficulties of the incident of the poetry book. I have tried to show that those difficulties are imaginary. But no amount of chronological difficulties would induce me to accept a moral impossibility like this. It would be better to give up the story altogether. When Osburh died we do not know. Her name does not occur in the Chronicle or in charters. If she died in 854 or 855[6], grief for her loss may have been an additional motive for Æthelwulf to seek the spiritual consolations associated with a visit to the holy places.

Æthelwulf's death.

§ 61. Æthelwulf did not long survive his return from the Continent, dying about fifteen months later, January 13, 858[7]. Looking back over his reign of eighteen and a half years we seem to see that Wessex had hardly maintained

[1] W. M. II. xlii.

[2] Biographia Liter. Britan., i. 385.

[3] i. 296, 311; modified in Thorpe's translation, ii. 44. Pauli rightly protests against the theory, p. 67.

[4] Dict. Nat. Biog., i. 154.

[5] 'nobilis ingenio, nobilis et genere,' 469 A [4].

[6] cf. Pauli, u. s. p. 67.

[7] See Chron. ii. 81, where I have shown that the Chronicle's (and Asser's) two years is too long. The Roman historian on the other hand cuts him off too rapidly: 'reuersus ad propriu regnum . . . *post paucos dies* uitan finiuit,' Liber Pontificalis, ii. 148.

he advance which she had made under Egbert; and indeed n some respects that advance was probably greater in ppearance than in reality. There is no trace of any xercise of superiority on Æthelwulf's part in regard to Northumbria or East Anglia; and though it is unsafe o argue absolutely from silence, especially where our uthorities are so meagre, the inference seems confirmed by the title which Æthelwulf gives himself in one of his harters, 'Rex Australium populorum[1],' a district coinident with that denoted by Asser's Saxonia, as explained above[2]. While a Mercian charter which makes special provision for the entertainment of heralds (*praecones*) on heir journeys between Mercia and Northumbria, and Mercia and Wessex[3] seems to indicate that those kingdoms existed on a footing of equality and mutual independence. If Burgred of Mercia's application to Æthelwulf in 853 for help against the Welsh implies that he regarded the latter in any way as his over-lord, it equally shows that Egbert's reduction of the Welsh had not been permanent. But on the whole I agree with Mr. Green[4] that the facts of Æthelwulf's reign do not bear out that character of weakness commonly ascribed to him, which rests, I think, largely on the idea that a reputation for piety is incompatible with mental vigour. The hold of Wessex on Kent and its dependencies was not relaxed. Egbert himself had found it expedient to conciliate local feeling by making his son Æthelwulf under-king of these districts[5], a system for which he could have pleaded the example of the great Charles, with which he must have become acquainted in

Limitations of his power.

Character of Æthelwulf's reign.

[1] Birch, No. 436; K.C.D. No. 254. In Sim. Dun. i. 204, 'Australes Saxones' has the same meaning.

[2] See above, § 30.

[3] Birch, No. 454; K.C.D. No. 261.

[4] Conquest of England, pp. 73, 74.

[5] Birch, No. 395; K. C. D. No. 223; Stubbs, C. H. i. 172.

the days of his exile[1]. The same system was continued at Egbert's death, and again at Æthelwulf's departure for Rome, and at his death; the latter division being prescribed, according to Asser[2], by the terms of Æthelwulf's will. Whether Æthelwulf really did venture to fly so much in the face of Mr. Freeman, as to dispose of his dominions by will, cannot be certainly known, as the will is not in existence. Anyhow, in view of the earlier precedents, I hesitate to accept the theory of Lappenberg and Pauli, that Æthelwulf intended definitely to sever Kent, &c., from Wessex, entailing it on the descendants of Æthelberht, who in turn were to remain excluded from the Wessex succession[3]. Possibly Kent was not at once ripe for incorporation with Wessex, and the arrangement may have been justified as a transitional measure. Happily it came to an end on Æthelbald's death in 860; Æthelberht retained Kent on his accession to Wessex[4]; Æthelred on this occasion, and Alfred, on the death of Æthelberht, patriotically abstaining from pressing the claims to Kent, which they might have based on the recent precedents. And this I take to be the residuum of fact in Asser's rhetorical statement[5] that Alfred might, if he liked, have assumed the royal power during his brother's lifetime.

Question of Æthelwulf's will.

Reign of Æthelbald.

§ 62. Of Æthelbald's short reign of two and a half years nothing is recorded in the Chronicle; Asser's statement[6] that his government was 'unbridled,' I regard as

[1] Malmesbury has an interesting passage on the effects of Egbert's foreign sojourn, G. R. i. 105.

[2] 472 B [12].

[3] Pauli, u. s. p. 79; following Lappenberg, i. 296; E. T. ii. 27. I think they have been misled by the Latin version of Alfred's will, which, as I shall show (§ 64), is of no authority.

[4] 'Ut iustum erat,' adds Asser, 473 A [14].

[5] 477 C [24]; cf. Lib. de Hyda, p. 27: 'Ethelredus, quem princeps gloriosus Alfredus coegit ante se regnare.'

[6] 472 D [13].

a mere flourish, based on his alleged incestuous marriage; while Henry of Huntingdon's pathetic sigh that 'at his death England realised how much she had lost[1],' I take to be an equally valuable piece of rhetoric on the other side. With Æthelberht's reign of rather over five years the Danish struggle[2] enters on a new and more serious phase. Under him, as we have seen[3], Winchester was taken in the year 860, and though the assailants were ultimately driven off, a severe blow must have been struck at the prestige of Wessex by the capture of her capital[4]. The wintering of the Danes in Thanet in 865, marks, according to Steenstrup[5], the beginning of the deliberate and systematic attempt to conquer England. The recent incorporation of Kent with Wessex did not prevent the Kentishmen from making a separate agreement with the foe. The next year, 866, the Danes wintered in East Anglia, and there too a separate peace was made, to be followed, four years

New phase of the Danish struggle under Æthelberht.

[1] See p. 152.

[2] I use the words Danes and Danish, as the Chronicle does, for the Scandinavian invaders generally, without professing to distinguish the origin of each separate band. This is the general English use, on the Continent the generic name is Nortmanni, Northmen; Green, Conq. Eng. p. 68; cf. Einhard, Vita Car. c. 12: 'Dani ac Sueones quos Nortmannos uocamus'; ibid. c. 14: 'Nortmanni qui Dani uocantur.' Ranke says: 'it is impossible to distinguish Danes and Northmen,' Weltgesch., VI. i. 42. For a vivid description of their ravages in France see Folcuini Gesta Abb. Lobiensium, cc. 16, 17, Pertz, iv. 61, 62; and the verses of Ermoldus Nigellus, Dümmler, Poetae aeui Carolini, ii. 59. Cf. also the well-known description of the earlier and very similar ravages of the Saxons, Sidonius Apollinaris, Epist. viii. 6.

[3] See above, § 57.

[4] The Chronicle mentions this under 860, but only with the vague date 'on his dæge,' 'in his [Æthelberht's] time.' This seems to show that this part of the Chronicle cannot have been written up till some little time after the event. It is a foreign Chronicler, Prudentius Trecensis, who enables us to fix it to the year of Æthelberht's accession, 860, Pertz, i. 454. For what follows the Chronicle is the authority, except where otherwise stated.

[5] Vikinger, p. 55.

later, by the definite conquest of that land, and the death of its martyr-king, St. Edmund. In 867 the never-ending civil discords of Northumbria opened that country also to the invaders; and there too a separate peace was made, and a puppet king, Egbert, was set up by the Danes[1] in the district north of the Tyne, just as they set up Ceolwulf, a few years later, in Mercia. Mercia's turn was to come the following year.

Accession of Æthelred; Alfred's public life begins.

But meanwhile, in 866, Æthelred had succeeded his brother Æthelberht on the throne of Wessex, and it is under Æthelred that the public life of Alfred begins. A late authority[2] states that Æthelred was Alfred's favourite brother. The statement is probably a mere inference from the record of their co-operation contained in the Chronicle and Asser; but in itself it is likely enough.

In 868 the Danes invaded Mercia and wintered at Nottingham. Burgred, who with his Witan had in 853 invoked Æthelwulf's help against the Welsh, and who that same year had married Æthelwulf's only daughter Ealhswith, now once more with his Witan invoked the aid of Æthelred and Alfred against this newer and much more dangerous foe. The brothers obeyed the call, and marched to Nottingham, but they did not venture to attack the Danish lines, and the Mercians made peace with the invaders.

§ 63. It will have been noticed that the Mercian application for West Saxon help is said to have been made to Æthelred and Alfred jointly[3]; and it is significant that it is just before this Mercian campaign that Asser first applies

[1] Sim. Dun. i. 55 f., 225; ii. 106, 110, 377, 391.

[2] Liber de Hyda, p. 27.

[3] According to MS. F of the Chronicle, the appointment of Æthelred to the archbishopric of Canterbury was made by Æthelred and Alfred jointly, Chron. i. 283.

to Alfred the title *secundarius*[1] alluded to in an earlier section. This title is unique in English history. Apart from Asser and writers who copy Asser, the only instances of the use of the word given by Ducange are as the title of a monastic officer. And this to some extent confirms the suggestion already made[2], that the word is to be traced to Celtic influence; for in Irish *secnab*, literally 'second abbot,' is one of the regular titles of the prior of a monastery. And I look on 'secundarius' as the equivalent of the Irish 'tanist,' the person appointed or elected during the lifetime of the chief as his future successor[3]; and it is to be remarked that the Irish word *tanaise* or *tanaiste*, anglicised 'tanist,' actually means 'secundus.' The institution of tanistry existed among the Welsh[4], though I have not come across any name for it so closely corresponding with the meaning of 'secundarius' as the Irish *tanaiste*. What then I take to be the significance of the title as applied to Alfred is this: that some time between Æthelred's accession in 866 and 868 a definite agreement was come to, by which Alfred was recognised as Æthelred's successor, to the exclusion, for the present at any rate, of the latter's children (if at this time he had any); Alfred in return perhaps definitely abandoning any claim to Kent. This theory derives some confirmation from the very similar arrangement which was come to about this time

Title of *secundarius* given to Alfred by Asser.

Significance of the title.

[1] 475 A [19]; it occurs again 476 D [22] (battle of Ashdown); 477 C [24], in relation to Alfred's accession. In the last passage Alfred is said to have borne the title 'uiuentibus fratribus.' The plural is probably mere rhetoric; otherwise it might point to the arrangement as to the succession having been made under Æthelberht, which is not impossible; cf. Ailred of Rievaulx' phrase: 'cum fratribus aliquo tempore regnauit,' ed. Migne, col. 719.

[2] See above, p. 40.

[3] cf. O'Curry, Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish, I. cxxxii f.

[4] Rhŷs and Brynmor Jones, The Welsh People, p. 203.

Alfred's will.

in regard to the private landed property belonging to the brothers. In the preamble to Alfred's will it is stated that Æthelwulf left certain property to be held in common by the three brothers, Æthelbald, Æthelred, and Alfred, the ultimate survivor to have the whole. On the death of Æthelbald, 'Æthelred and I,' says Alfred, 'gave our share in trust to our kinsman[1], King Æthelberht, on condition that he restored it to us [i.e. at his death] in the same state as he received it. And he did so, not only in respect of that property which he obtained by our concurrence, but also in respect of that which he himself acquired.' When Æthelred succeeded, Alfred suggested in the Witan a final division of the property. Æthelred pointed out the difficulty of division, and promised that, if Alfred would withdraw his proposal, he (Æthelred) would leave him not only the whole of the joint property, but also that acquired by himself separately. To this Alfred agreed. The next clause recites how certain modifications were made at a later time, because the Danish troubles had brought home to the brothers that, under the original agreement, the children of the one who died first might be left without any provision.

This will refers to private property only; not to the Crown.

§ 64. It is to be observed in the first place that this will, and the provisions of Æthelwulf's will therein recited, have to do solely with the private property of the family; there is not a word about the royal succession. It is only in the Latin version that this is mentioned; and that the Latin is not the original, is proved by the fact that it is full of the most obvious mistranslations from the Saxon. Indeed, I am not sure that the introduction of the royal

[1] It is curious that though Alfred speaks of Æthelbald, Æthelred and himself as three brethren, he only calls Æthelberht 'our kinsman,' 'uncer mæg.' The same use occurs in Bede, p. 188, where Oswy is called Oswald's 'mæg.'

succession is not the result of a mistranslation[1]. Secondly, the inclusion of Æthelbald is rather against the story of his rebellion; while on the other hand the omission of Æthelberht is to be accounted for on the supposition that he had been provided for in other clauses of the will, not here recited; for Asser distinctly says[2] that Æthelwulf divided his private property between his sons and his daughter. However, notwithstanding the exclusion of Æthelberht from this particular portion of the inheritance, Æthelred and Alfred made it over to him, on condition that at his death they should receive, not only it, but also his separate property; in other words, they made much the same agreement as was ultimately made between Æthelred and Alfred.

But analogous arrangements were probably made as to the succession.

The latter agreement was made, says Alfred, when Æthelred had succeeded; that is, shortly after 866. It does not seem to me unreasonable to suppose that some arrangement was made at the same time with reference to the succession, and sanctioned in the same Witenagemót. Alfred's marriage took place according to Asser in 868, the very year of the Mercian expedition. Whether at the time of the agreement about the private property any of Æthelred's children had been born is uncertain. The subsequent modifications, providing for the children of the two brothers, would seem to suggest that they had not. Anyhow they must have been too young to be contemplated as possible successors, in the not unlikely event of Æthelred's falling in battle; and the danger of the country required

[1] Near the beginning Alfred speaks of 'min yrfe þæt me God and mine yldran forgeafon,' i. e. 'the inheritance which God and my forefathers granted me.' The Latin translator gives 'principes' for 'yldran,' a meaning which it can have. He therefore naturally took the sentence to refer to Alfred's election as king by the Witan; and the rest may have followed from this.

[2] 472 B [12].

that there should be no uncertainty on the question of the succession. It is by this definite recognition of Alfred as successor that I would explain the title of 'secundarius' given to him by Asser. I may add that, except as to the Celtic analogies which I have suggested, this is practically the view of Dr. Stubbs[1], though I was not conscious of the fact when I worked out my own theory.

These explain the title *secundarius*.

§ 65. For two years Wessex had a respite. The year 869 was spent by the invaders in Deira with their headquarters at York. In 870, as already mentioned, they completed their conquest of East Anglia. But in the following year the storm burst. This was indeed 'Alfred's Year of Battles,' as it is called by the late Mr. W. H. Simcox in an excellent article on the subject, which he contributed to the second number of the English Historical Review[2]. Here, as seven years later, the object of the Danes seems to have been to surprise Wessex by an attack in mid-winter. Mr. Simcox, by reckoning back the intervals between the various engagements as given in the Chronicle from the death of Æthelred, which is stated to have occurred 'after Easter,' placed the beginning of the campaign in January. But a fact, first pointed out, as far as I know, by Sir James Ramsay[3], enables us to fix it more precisely. Heahmund, bishop of Sherborne, fell in the battle of Marton, the last engagement in which Æthelred took part. So little was his warlike activity held to derogate from his episcopal character, that his death in battle against a heathen foe won him the title of martyr[4], and a place in the calendar. His day is March 22, and that would almost certainly be the day on which he fell; and this fits in well with the statement of the Chronicle that the battle of

'Alfred's Year of Battles.'

[1] Const. Hist. i. 142 note.
[2] April, 1886.
[3] Foundations of England, i. 244.
[4] 'Martyrio coronatus est.' R. W. i. 318.

Marton was before Easter, which fell on April 15 in 871[1]. Reckoning backward from this we get January 22 for the English defeat at Basing, January 8 for the victory of Ashdown, January 4 for the abortive attack on the Danish lines at Reading, December 31 for the successful engagement at Englefield, and December 28 for the descent of the Danes on Reading. These two last dates according to our reckoning belong to 870; but the Chronicler, who begins his year with Christmas Day[2], is quite correct in placing them in 871. Chronology.

The Danes seized Reading and fortified the tongue of land between the Kennet and the Thames[3]; a large foraging party under two jarls was cut up by Æthelwulf, the ealdorman of Berkshire, at Englefield, but the main attack by the royal brothers on the Danish lines at Reading failed, and here the victor of Englefield was slain. Gaimar gives some details as to the route by which the defeated English made their escape, which seem to me perfectly genuine, though I know not whence he derived them[4]. Mr. Simcox objects to them on military grounds, of which I do not profess to be a judge. Anyhow, only four days later the English gained the brilliant victory of Ashdown, about five-and-twenty miles further to the west. I confess I find it difficult to fit into the Chronicler's account of the battle the well-known anecdote of Asser[5], which tells how Æthelred refused to engage until the priest had finished saying mass, though Mr. Simcox accepts it as 'perfectly historical.' However, if true, Æthelred's delay had no bad effect on the result of the battle; and the bringing up of a fresh body of troops after the enemy had The Danes at Reading. Battle of Ashdown.

[1] Not March 31, as Mr. Simcox says.

[2] Chronicle, II. cxxxix. ff.

[3] Asser, 476 A [21]. This is one of Asser's good additions to the Chronicle.

[4] Chronicle, ii. 87.

[5] 476 C [22].

already been disordered by Alfred's 'boar-like' charge[1], may have largely contributed to the victory. So that the cheap sneers of some writers have not the merit of being even superficially effective.

The Ashdown thorn.

We have noticed[2] that among the objects of interest which Asser claims to have seen with his own eyes was the solitary thorn round which the battle of Ashdown raged. It is an interesting fact, first pointed out to me by my friend Mr. Taylor, that among the Berkshire Hundreds enumerated in Domesday is one called Nachededorn, i.e. Naked-thorn, containing within itself a manor of the same name, and also the manor of Ashdown[3]. As the name of a hundred, 'Naked-thorn' has perished; and the manors which it contained are by modern arrangements distributed among several hundreds. But it was suggested by Dr. Wilson, formerly President of Trinity College, Oxford[4], that the name of 'Naked-thorn' manor probably survived in a slightly altered form in the name of Roughthorn Farm, close to Ashdown[5]. The manor of Nakedthorn was held by the Conqueror in demesne; that of Ashdown by Henry de Ferrers. It is certainly, as Mr. Taylor remarks, an interesting fact that the site of the battle of Ashdown should have been owned by the Conqueror himself.

[1] 'Aprino more,' 476 D [23].

[2] See above, p. 16.

[3] Domesday, ff. 57 b, 60 a.

[4] See a letter to the Times of August 30, 1864, by Mr. Henry Moody of Winchester. I was wrong in identifying (Chron. ii. 87) the Compton near which Ashdown is to be sought with the Compton near East Ilsley; it is Compton Beauchamp in Shrivenham Hundred. This correction I also owe to Mr. Taylor.

[5] I cannot find Roughthorn Farm either on the six-inch or twenty-five-inch Ordnance map. There is a spot called Thickthorn about a mile east of Ashdown Park; a hill called Alfred's Castle just west of the Park, an Alfred's Hill between Longcot and Uffington; Danesfield Copse south of Lambourne.

From Ashdown the beaten Danes withdrew to their lines at Reading. A fortnight later fortune turned once more, and the English were defeated at Basing. This southward movement seems to indicate that the Danes were striking for Winchester, the capital of Wessex[1]. The fact that they were unable to press the attack home, shows that the English, though defeated, were still formidable. Then for two months our authorities are silent. The Chronicler tells us that in this year of battles there were no less than nine general engagements[2], not counting minor operations. But of these nine engagements only six are actually named, Englefield, Reading, Ashdown, Basing, Marton, Wilton. It is just possible that one or more of the unnamed battles may have taken place in the interval. The next engagement, however, that we hear of was at a place called by the Chronicler Meretun, which is neither Merton in Surrey, nor Merton near Bicester, nor (as I once thought) Marden near Devizes, but, as Mr. Simcox argues with great probability, Marton, about three miles south of Great Bedwin in Wiltshire; and here the English, at first victorious, had ultimately to yield possession of the field of battle, and a month later, shortly after Easter[3], Æthelred died. Whether he was wounded in the battle[4], or whether he was simply worn out by the incessant strain and exposure of the last four months, he equally died for England and the Faith, and it is difficult to read with patience the depreciatory comments of some writers, who seem here also to assume that piety and efficiency must be mutually exclusive qualities. But with Alfred to

Battles of Basing

and Marton.

Death of Æthelred.

[1] Simcox, u. s.

[2] 'Folc-gefeoht.'

[3] Florence gives the date as April 23, i. 85.

[4] Langtoft makes him killed in battle: 'fu navrez par un coup d'espeye'; this is certainly wrong. For Langtoft's confusions on the subject of Æthelred, see above, p. 65.

succeed him, Browning's noble words were certainly true of Æthelred :—

'O soldier-saint,
No work begun shall ever pause for death[1].'

Alfred's task.

The fate of England and of Western Europe hung, humanly speaking, on the heart and brain and arm of a young man of three-and-twenty years. That, under God, he proved himself equal to his high task, is what has justly earned for him the title of Great[2].

[1] The Ring and the Book, Pompilia, ad finem.

[2] This title is not older than the sixteenth century, Pauli, u. s. p. 2. In the Hyde Register, p. 13, Edward, Alfred's son, is called 'Eadweardus Magnus.'

LECTURE IV

ALFRED'S CAMPAIGNS AGAINST THE DANES; CIVIL ADMINISTRATION

Alfred's greatness.

§ 66. 'ALFRED is one of the greatest figures in the history of the world.' These are not the words of any insular patriot, but of the great German historian, Leopold von Ranke[1], who, if I may venture to criticise so great a man, is almost too diplomatic and cosmopolitan in his view of history, too little sensitive to purely national movements and aspirations.

State of England at his accession.

But, when Alfred ascended the throne in 871, the prospect was dark enough; and we can well believe what Asser tells us, confirmed as it seems to be by expressions of Alfred himself in the Boethius, that it was only reluctantly that Alfred undertook the burden laid upon him[2]. The earlier writer embodied in Simeon of Durham says distinctly that Alfred was elected by the chief men of the whole people[3]. Our primary authorities tell us nothing of this[4]; and though their silence is not conclusive[5], a formal election would probably be rendered unnecessary

[1] Weltgeschichte, VI. ii. 46.

[2] 'quasi inuitus' 477 C [24]; cf. Boethius, c. 17: 'þu watst þ me næfre seo gitsung 7 seo gemæg̃ þisses eorl̃lican anwealdes forwel ne licode, ne ic ealles forswiðe ne girnde þisses eorl̃lican rices,' ed. Sedgefield, p. 40.

[3] 'mox Elfredus a ducibus et a praesulibus totius gentis eligitur,' S. D. ii. 81.

[4] Asser's statement, u. s., that Alfred succeeded 'cum summa omnium . . . regni accolarum uoluntate,' probably does not refer to formal election.

[5] Cf. Chronicle, ii. 145, 146.

by the arrangement already come to with reference to the succession; while it certainly was no time for coronation festivities or anything of that kind. Even before Æthelred's death a new force of wikings, 'a summer army[1]' as opposed to those who had wintered in the land, invaded the country. Æthelred was interred at Wimborne, where, in Asser's words 'he awaits the coming of the Lord, and the first resurrection with the just[2].' Even while Alfred was busied with his brother's exequies, an engagement was being fought in his absence. Ethelwerd alone tells us of this engagement[3]; and at one time I supposed[4] that his account was merely a mistaken version of the battle of Wilton, but I am now convinced that his account is distinct, and that it is not improbable in itself. If I understand him rightly, and he is never very easy to understand, the new force of wikings came to Reading, where they were joined by the Danes who had wintered in the country; and together they defeated an English force, which was in no great numbers, owing to the absence of the king. If this is correct, we have here one of the unnamed 'folc-gefeoht' of the Chronicle[5]. But though Ethelwerd calls it a barren victory[6] for the Danes, it seems to have opened to them

Fresh invaders.

Second battle of Reading.

[1] 'sumor-lida.'

[2] 477 C [24]. The same phrase is used of Burgred of Mercia, who died at Rome, 478 B [26]. Mr. Simcox sees in the phrase (based on Rev. xx. 6) a possible trace of British Pelagianism. Anyhow the special use of the phrase in these two cases is no doubt due to the fact that Asser regarded Æthelred as a martyr, and Burgred as a pilgrim.

[3] p. 514 C.

[4] Chronicle, ii. 88.

[5] Ethelwerd distinctly recognises that there were three engagements in addition to the six which he names: 'tria certamina exceptis supra memoratis bellis'; only Ethelwerd's list of six would differ from that in the Chronicle by the omission of Wilton and the substitution of the second battle of Reading. Mr. Simcox does not notice this passage of Ethelwerd; perhaps he too regarded it as a distorted version of the battle of Wilton.

[6] 'sterilis uictoriae status.'

the heart of Wessex, for the next engagement was fought at Wilton, a month after Æthelred's death, that is towards the end of May, where another of those enigmatic contests took place, in which the Danes are put to flight, and yet encamp upon the field of battle. Possibly the Danes, whether in real or pretended flight, turned upon their disorderly pursuers and defeated them. This seems to be distinctly suggested by Asser's narrative[1]. After this, peace was made, probably by purchase, and a respite was well worth paying for. The Danes had suffered scarcely less than the West Saxons[2], and for four whole years they avoided Wessex. The question has been asked: Why did not Burgred of Mercia come to the help of his brothers-in-law in their hour of need, as they had come to help him three years before? Mr. Simcox points out that here too the despised Ingulf[3] supplies the right answer. Burgred was detained by an incursion of the Welsh, acting, no doubt, in concert with the Danes.

Battle of Wilton.

§ 67. After this peace, the Danes moved from Reading, which had remained their head-quarters, to London, where they spent the winter of 871–2, and forced the Mercians once more to purchase peace. Alfred seems to have kept at any rate an army of observation in the neighbourhood. For a later annal, speaking of the alms sent by Alfred to Rome and India in 883[4], says that this was in fulfilment of a vow made 'when they encamped against the host at London. And through God's mercy,' adds the pious

The Danes at London.

[1] 'peraudacitatem persequentium decipientes,' 477 D [25].

[2] 'quot millia Paganae expeditionis . . . perierunt, nisi soli Deo, incognitum,' 477 E [25]. The reflexion, if we allow for Asser's usual rhetoric, is not unfounded.

[3] 'Beorredus Rex Merciorum . . . cum Britonibus occupatus, qui crebris irruptionibus Occidentalem partem Regni sui Merciae inquietabant,' p. 25.

[4] This notice is in all MSS. of the Chronicle except A. See notes ad loc.

Chronicler, 'they fully obtained their prayer after that vow.' Whether these last words refer to an actual defeat inflicted on the Danes by Alfred, or only to his success in keeping them out of Wessex, we cannot tell. In either case the notice illustrates very strikingly the fragmentary nature of even our best authorities. The weight of the exactions which Burgred had to impose to raise the ransom for the Danes, is illustrated by a lease executed this very year (872) of lands belonging to the see of Worcester, which was necessitated 'owing to the enormous tribute in the year when the heathen sat in London[1].' The next year the Danes moved northwards and wintered at Torksey, 872–3. The next winter, 873–4, was spent at Repton, and in 874, after destroying that mausoleum of the Mercian kings[2], they overran the whole of Mercia, drove out Burgred, who withdrew to Rome to die; and set up in his place for the present a puppet king in the person of 'an unwise king's thane,' as the Chronicle quaintly calls him, named Ceolwulf, 'an Englishman by race, but a barbarian in cruelty[3].' In 875 the Danes divided their forces, and part went to the Tyne and part went to Cambridge. The only event recorded in connexion with the history of Wessex in this year is the defeat, by Alfred in person[4], as it would seem, of a small fleet of seven wiking ships.

Their exactions.

They overrun Mercia.

§ 68. But in 876 the Cambridge division of the Danes managed to slip past the Saxon 'fyrd,' and get into Wareham, the ancient importance of which is still attested by the large quadrangular earthworks[5]. We do not know

The Danes in Wareham.

[1] Birch, Nos. 533, 531; K. C. D. No. 303.

[2] 'monasterium celeberrimum, omnium regum Merciorum sacratissimum Mausoleum funditus destruxerunt,' Ingulf, p. 26 (cf. Fl. Wig. i. 72). On a point like this Ingulf may probably be trusted.

[3] 'Anglicus genere, sed barbarus impietate,' Ingulf, p. 27.

[4] 'fór Ælfred cyning út on sæ.'

[5] Cf. Murray's Guide Book for

what time of year this was: but apparently the Danes stayed there till the following winter[1]; when Alfred found it expedient to make peace with them, by purchase, according to Ethelwerd; the Danes giving hostages, and swearing their most binding oaths on the sacred temple-ring, 'on which they would never swear before to any people.' Yet in spite of this, the negotiations were only a blind on the part of the Danes, and under cover of them they took to their horses, and slipped away by night to Exeter. This seems to have been early in 877. Alfred failed to overtake them before they reached Exeter, and he did not venture to attack them behind their fortifications[2]. But he sat down and blockaded them by land, and, if a later account may be trusted[3], his ships watched the mouth of the Exe. Meanwhile a wiking fleet of 120 sail was making its way west about from East Anglia, no doubt with the view of throwing supplies and reinforcements into Exeter. But off the coast of Swanage they were caught in a violent storm, and in Gaimar's uncomplimentary language, who rather exaggerates the number of the fleet, '140 ships went to the devils[4].' But for the wreck of these 120 ships the issue of the campaign, perhaps even of the whole war, might have been very different[5]. The motto on a Dutch medal struck to commemorate the ruin of the Armada in

They make a dash for Exeter.

Destruction of a Danish fleet.

Wilts., Dorset, and Somerset. Wareham is the only English place to which Asser gives the title of 'castellum,' 478 D [27]. He uses the term once of a Danish fort, 483 B [37].

[1] The evasion of the Danes from Wareham to Exeter is mentioned in the Chron. both under 876 and 877. The earlier mention is probably merely proleptic, giving by anticipation what was the issue of the affair.

[2] 'þær him mon to ne meahte.'

[3] This is the interpolated passage in Asser, which cannot, as I have shown above (§ 20), be traced further back than Roger of Wendover. It sounds however perfectly genuine.

[4] v. 3105.

[5] I owe this suggestion to Professor Earle.

1588 would apply here also: 'Flauit et dissipati sunt[1].' 'Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters[2].' And so the Danes in Exeter were fain to submit, and swore mighty oaths, which for once they kept, and withdrew to Mercia, which they now partitioned, dividing part of it among themselves, and restoring the remainder to their puppet Ceolwulf. This partition is of some prospective importance as being probably the origin of the distinction between English and Danish Mercia[3].

Mercia partitioned.

The campaign of 878.

§ 69. Of the sudden swoop of the Danes on Chippenham in January, 878, and Alfred's retirement to Athelney I have said enough above[4]. It was at Easter, March 23, 878, that Alfred and his little band reared the fort on Athelney. Some seven weeks later, that is to say, about the middle of May, he moved out of it to Brixton Deverill near Warminster. The date of this movement must have been carefully fixed, and widely made known by Alfred's messengers beforehand. For here he was joined at once by the levies of Somerset, Wilts., and part of Hampshire, 'and they were fain of him,' says the Chronicler, in words the more expressive for their extreme simplicity. How effectually the preliminary arrangements had been made, is shown by the fact that the very next day Alfred was able to continue his forward movement to Leigh near Westbury, and the next day to Edington[5]. Here a general engage-

[1] Ranke, Engl. Gesch., B. III. c. 6.

[2] Exodus xv. 10.

[3] For the whole of this and the following sections I may refer to the Chronicle, with my notes.

[4] § 46, above.

[5] I give what seems to me the most probable line of march. But every one of these three places, (1) Ecgbryhtesstan, (2) Iglea, (3) Ethandun, has been variously identified. The following series have been proposed—A. (1) Brixton, (2) Clay Hill near Warminster (3) Edington; B. (as in the text) C. (1) Bratton near Westbury (2) Highley Common near Melks

ment was fought with the whole Danish army under Guthrum, which had moved out of Chippenham. The result was a complete victory for Alfred: 'he put them to flight, and rode after them to their fort, and sat down before it for a fortnight, and then the host (*here*) gave him leading hostages and swore mighty oaths that they would quit his realm. And they further promised that their king should receive baptism. And so it was performed, and three weeks later [that is, about the end of the first week in June] the king Guthrum, with twenty-nine of those that were worthiest in the host, came to him at Aller near Athelney; and the king received him at baptism, and his chrism-loosing was at Wedmore; and he was twelve nights with the king, and he honoured him much, and feed his followers.' The 'fort' to which Alfred pursued his flying foes was, I think, the Danish lines at Chippenham; and though high authorities, including Professor Earle, take a different view[1], I am glad to see that I am supported by our military historian, Professor Oman[2]. The submission of the Danes would be furthered by a great disaster which befell another body of them earlier in the year. A wiking fleet, which had wintered in South Wales[3], crossed to the opposite coast of Devon; probably intending, after ravaging the southern coast of the Bristol Channel, as they had already ravaged the northern coast, to effect a junction with the Danes at Chippenham. The men of Devon, under their ealdorman Odda, took refuge in a rude fort[4],

Battle of Ethandun.

Submission of the Danes.

Defeat of the Danes in North Devon.

ham, (3) Heddington on the Roman road from Bath to Marlborough. Bratton seems to me impossible on philological grounds. Yatton has also been proposed for Ethandun. Philologically it is possible; (cf. Yarnton near Oxford = Eardingtun) but its position north-west of Chippenham is against it.

[1] viz. that it is Bratton Camp, between Edington and Westbury.

[2] Essays, p. 138.

[3] Asser, 481 B [32], v. s. pp. 44, 51.

[4] 'arcem imparatam atque im-

probably Kenny Castle near Appledore. The Danes, under Ubba, the brother of Halfdene and Ingwar[1], expected an easy victory, but the English, sallying out unexpectedly at early dawn, put their foes to rout, slaying over 800 of them, and driving the rest to their ships[2]. The mystic Raven Banner fell into the hands of the victors. After the ceremony at Wedmore the Danes retired, in accordance with their promise, to Cirencester[3], and the next year, 879, they withdrew altogether to East Anglia; while a body of wikings, which had gathered at Fulham, crossed to the Continent. It would seem that, whether by formal compact or no[4], not only Wessex and its dependencies but English Mercia west of Watling Street was cleared of the invader.

The Danes retire to East Anglia.

§ 70. I have said elsewhere that Alfred holds in real history the place which romance assigns to Arthur[5]; and certainly, after this mid-May victory of Alfred at Edington,

Results of the battle of Ethandun.

munitam, nisi quod moenia *nostro more erecta* . . . haberet . . . locus tutissimus . . . sicut nos ipsi uidimus,' ib. Is any type of earthworks known which is specifically Welsh? Asser's episcopal charge of Exeter, if a fact, would account for his knowledge of the district. The name of Odda comes from Ethelwerd, p. 515 D.

[1] Mediaeval and modern writers, overlooking the word 'brother,' write as if it were Ingwar and Halfdene themselves who fell; so S. D. ii. 111, 114. Professor Oman writes Ingwar and Hubba, on I know not what authority, Essays, p. 137. The name Ubba comes only from Gaimar.

[2] The details are mostly from Asser, u. s. He gives the number of slain as 1200; i. e. cccc for ıɔccc. Ethelwerd, p. 515 E, says that the Danes were finally victorious; but it is hard to reconcile this with the Chronicle, and still more with Asser.

[3] The Chronicle puts this under 879; but, seeing that the battle of Ethandun was fought in May, it almost certainly belongs to the same year 878. It is this mistake which throws the chronology of the Chronicle a year wrong from this point up to 897 (=896).

[4] No document exists embodying the terms of the agreement of 878. 'Alfred and Guthrum's peace,' often confused with the treaty of Wedmore, belongs to 886.

[5] Chron. ii. 114.

his followers might well have sung the song which our late Laureate places in the mouths of Arthur's men[1]:—

'Blow trumpet, for the world is white with May;
Blow trumpet, the long night hath roll'd away!
Blow thro' the living world—"Let the King reign."

'Blow, for our Sun is mighty in his May!
Blow, for our Sun is mightier day by day!
Clang battleaxe, and clash brand! Let the King reign.

'The King will follow Christ; and we the King
In whom high God hath breathed a secret thing.
Fall battleaxe, and flash brand! Let the King reign.'

'The long night has rolled away.'—'Yea, even like as a dream when one awaketh, so shalt Thou make their image to vanish.'—Every historian is agreed that this is the turning-point in the history, not only of England, but of Western Europe. 'Wessex was saved; and in saving Wessex, Alfred saved England; and in saving England, he saved Western Europe from becoming a heathen Scandinavian power[2].' In recognising the Danish occupation of East Anglia, Eastern Mercia, and Northumbria, Alfred was hardly making a cession, for they had never been his to cede; he was at most giving up a shadowy overlordship which neither he, nor his brothers, nor, probably, even his father had ever exercised. The only district which was in strictness ceded was Essex; and it was a heavy loss that London remained for some years longer a Danish city. But the gains far outweighed the losses; and we can but ask in wonder what were the causes of so great a change. Some light is gained when we have realised that Alfred at Athelney was not burning cakes,

Loss and gain.

The gain outweighs the loss.

[1] Idylls of the King, The Coming of Arthur.

[2] Chron. u. s. chiefly from Green, Conq. Engl. pp. 111 ff.

but organising victory. Then, too, he had good helpers. We have seen what Odda did in Devonshire; and Ethelwerd lays stress on the co-operation of Æthelnoth, the ealdorman of Somerset, in the dark days of Athelney [1]. There is nothing like work in common for a great cause, in face of great difficulties, for cementing friendship [2], and perhaps it is to these days that Werferth of Worcester looks back when in one of his charters he speaks of Æthelnoth as 'the friend of us all [3].'

Mobility of the Danes.

§ 71. Another and very important point is this. The chief difficulties of our forefathers under Alfred, as of us, their descendants, in South Africa at the present day, arose from the extreme mobility of the enemy [4], and the way in which they used the horses which they brought with them or captured [5], not indeed for fighting (that was never either the Danish or the Saxon mode of warfare), but for dashing from point to point, and eluding [6] and surprising the enemy. They were, in modern phrase, mounted infantry. It would seem as if the English were learning to copy them in this.

[1] p. 515 D.

[2] Cf. what is said in the Soliloquies, p. 182: 'gyf þonne æfre gebyreð ƿ þu ... hæfst ealle þine freond myd þe ... on þam ilcan weorce, 7 on þam ilcan willan ðe ðe best lyst don'; cf. Boeth. xxix. § 1 (p. 66): 'cyningas ne magon nænne weorðscipe forðbrengan buton hiora þegna fultume.'

[3] 'urne ealra freond,' Birch, No. 582; K. C. D. No. 327. I do not mean to assert that Werferth was at Athelney or Edington, though he may have been. But he and Æthelnoth were working for a common end, and his district benefited largely by Alfred's victory.

[4] 'They were the first European warriors who realised the value of quick movement in war,' Green, C. E. p. 89.

[5] 'þær gehorsude wurdon,' 866; 'se gehorsoda here,' 876, 877; 'þa wearþ se here gehorsod æfter þæm gefeohte,' 881. Conversely after a defeat: 'hie wurdon þær behorsude,' 885. Asser, describing this last incident, says: 'equis, quos de Francia secum adduxerant, derelictis,' 483 C [37]; 'hie asettan him ... ofer [sc. to England] mid horsum,' 893; cf. Flor. Wig. i. 111.

[6] Note the use of 'bestelan' for the movements of the invaders, 865, 876 (*bis*), 878.

You may have noticed that in the extract from the Chronicle which I read just now, describing the sequel of the battle of Edington, it is said that Alfred '*rode* after the enemy to their fort.' The only other occasion up to this campaign [1], where any such phrase is used of an English force, is in the preceding year, where the Chronicler describes the brave but ineffectual dash which Alfred made to try and intercept the treacherous Danes before they got into Exeter [2].

Alfred's personal influence.

But after all, the greatest of all human causes of success (though it is not merely human) is contained in those words of the Chronicler already quoted, 'they were fain of him.' The personality of Alfred was beginning to tell, and to rally to itself all that was worthiest in the nation. It has been compared, not unaptly, to the resurrection of France under Joan of Arc [3].

Comparative peace.

§ 72. For the next few years Alfred had comparative peace, the Danes being mostly occupied on the Continent. There was a small, but successful, naval engagement in 881 or 882 [4], and in 884 [5] a body of the enemy landed in Kent and laid siege to Rochester, throwing up their usual fortifications round their own positions. But the besieged defended themselves successfully till Alfred came with the fyrd, and the besiegers were in their turn besieged, and withdrew, possibly by agreement, to the Continent once more, leaving their prisoners, and the horses which they had brought with them from over seas, in Alfred's

[1] Earlier in the annal Alfred 'rides' to Brixton.

[2] 'Ælfred æfter þam gehorsudan here mid fierde rád.'

[3] Sir Walter Besant, Essays, p. 17.

[4] For purely English events we have not, as a rule, the help of the foreign Chronicles, and cannot therefore be sure whether they also are dated a year in advance; but probably in most cases they are.

[5] That this and not 885 is the true date is proved by the Annales Vedastini, and the Chronicon Reginonis, Pertz, i. 521, 594.

hands[1]. The appearance of their kinsmen in Kent seems to have been too much for the loyalty of the Danes in East Anglia. 'They broke the peace with King Alfred[2].' Alfred at once sent his fleet from Kent[3], where it had no doubt been supporting his operations at Rochester, across the broad estuary of the Thames, and at the mouth of the Stour, between Essex and Suffolk, the English defeated and captured a fleet of sixteen sail; but on their way back were met by a superior fleet of East Anglian Danes, and defeated in their turn. It will be remembered that it is in reference to this defeat that the earlier writer in Simeon of Durham gives us the wonderful story based on the corrupt reading in Asser of 'dormiret' for 'domum iret[4].'

Revolt of the East Anglian Danes.

§ 73. The next stage in the liberation of England was a very important one, being nothing less than the acquisition of London by Alfred. This is placed by the Chronicle in 886. But we have seen that the Chronicle is here in advance by a year of the true chronology; the true date is therefore probably 885. It is clear that Alfred did not gain this great success without the use of force[5]; and I am inclined to see in this the culmination of the measures which he took to chastise the East Anglian Danes for their breach of the peace in the preceding year[6]. It is with this that we must associate the document known as Alfred and Guthrum's peace[7], often wrongly confused with

Alfred wins London.

[1] Asser, 483 B, C [37].

[2] This comes at the end of the annal in the Chronicle, but almost certainly refers to an earlier period of the year.

[3] 'de Cantio,' Asser, u. s.

[4] See above, § 50.

[5] Chron. ii. 99 f.

[6] Whatever the date, the Chronicle places the occupation of London in close connexion with the breach of the peace by the Danes in the preceding year. It may even be that a desire to bring out that connexion has led to the mention of the breach being postponed to the end of the annal.

[7] Schmid, Gesetze, pp. 106 ff. Cf. ib. xxxviii f.; and see the very interesting remarks of Green, C. E. pp. 151–3.

the settlement of 878. By this treaty the boundaries of 878 were materially modified in Alfred's favour. They now ran up the Thames to the mouth of the Lea, up the Lea to its source, thence to Bedford, and so up the Ouse to Watling Street. By this, not only London, but a considerable district east of Watling Street was made over to Alfred. The Danes had paid heavily for their momentary treachery. But again it illustrates the fragmentary nature of our sources, that we hear nothing of the military operations which must have led up to this success.

Effect of this on Alfred's position.

It had an immense effect upon Alfred's position, and made him more clearly than ever the head of the nation. 'There submitted to him the whole Angle-kin that was not in subjection to the Danes.' The city was restored and fortified, and committed to the care of Alfred's son-in-law, Æthelred, whom soon after 878[1] he had made ealdorman of the part of Mercia which fell to him by the settlement of that year. Once, in 851, under Berhtwulf, the Danes had captured London; they had occupied it in 872 under Burgred; it had fallen to their share at the division of Mercia in 877. But never again, after Alfred's restoration of it, was it ever forcibly captured by them or by any other foreign host. Alfred is rightly called the second founder of London[2].

Alfred, the second founder of London.

Peace.

Once more, for a few years, Alfred had peace. In 889 or 890 his old enemy and god-son, Guthrum-Athelstan of East Anglia, died. How far he had really become a Christian we cannot tell. In spite of his baptism Ethelwerd uncharitably dismisses him below: 'he breathed out

[1] Certainly as early as 880; see the charter Birch, No. 547; K. C. D. No. 311.

[2] Essays, pp. 19, 57, 245 ff.; Ranke, u. s. VI. ii. 43: 'Die merkantile Hauptstadt der Welt verdankt dem König Alfred gleichsam ihre zweite Gründung.'

his soul to Orcus[1].' But for the present the Danes of East Anglia made no movement.

The final storm.

§ 74. In 892 the final storm burst on England; but the result was only to show the strength of the system which Alfred had built up during the years of peace[2]. The splendid annals 893–7 (892–6 according to the true chronology), in which, as has been said, we seem to hear the very voice of Alfred himself[3], and beside which, as the same authority declares[4], 'every other piece of prose not in these Chronicles merely, but throughout the whole range of extant Saxon literature, must assume a secondary rank,' give us some insight into the reforms which Alfred had effected.

Military reforms; (1) the *fyrd* divided.

(1) To counteract the standing weakness of citizen-armies, which made them liable to melt away at the critical moment, when their short term of service was expired, he divided the fyrd into two divisions, which were to relieve one another at fixed intervals, 'so that always half were at home, and half on service.' This measure is particularly interesting, as it may have been suggested to Alfred by his studies in Orosius, where a similar institution is attributed to the Amazons, and in Alfred's translation is described in language very similar to that of the Chronicle[5].

(2) Fortifications.

(2) Besides the two alternating divisions of the fyrd, the Chronicle enumerates 'the men who were bound to keep the burgs[6].' If the Danes had taught the Saxons the importance of mobility when in movement, they had no less surely taught them the importance of fortifications when stationary. In the first place the towns were encouraged to fortify themselves—we have a very interesting

[1] 'Orco tradit spiramen,' p. 517 C.

[2] Malmesbury has some interesting remarks on this, G. R. i. 128, 129; cf. S. C. H. i. 191.

[3] See above, § 10.

[4] Earle, Chronicles, p. xvi.

[5] Chron. II. cvii, 109.

[6] Chron. 894 ad init.

document, unfortunately without date, which tells how Æthelred of Mercia, and his wife, Æthelflæd, lady of the Mercians, 'bade work the burg at Worcester for the protection of all the people[1]'; while in 898 there was a formal conference at Chelsea between Alfred, Æthelred, Æthelflæd, and Archbishop Plegmund on the fortifications of London[2]. But besides this, fortified camps were erected at strategic points. The important document known as the burghal hidage[3], which is only a very little later than Alfred's reign, seems to show that certain districts were appurtenant to these burgs, while 'the men who were bound to keep the burgs' would possibly hold their lands by a tenure analogous to that known under the feudal system as 'castle-guard.' Asser also insists strongly on the importance which Alfred attached to the construction of 'castella' or 'arces' (= burgs); though he also shows that Alfred had considerable difficulty in getting his subjects to adopt this novel mode of defence[4]. It would seem then that, in creating the famous lines of forts by which Edward and Æthelflæd secured the country which they won from the Danes, they were but carrying out the policy of their father[5].

(3) Number of thanes increased.

(3) It seems to have been part of Alfred's military policy to increase considerably the number of thanes, by conferring the privileges, and enforcing the obligations of thanehood on all owners of five hides of land, an estate

[1] Birch, No. 579; K. C. D. No. 1075.

[2] 'de instauratione urbis Londoniae,' Birch, No. 577.

[3] Birch, No. 1335; see Maitland, Domesday and Beyond, pp. 187, 188, 502 ff.

[4] 493 A, B [59, 60].

[5] There is a good passage on this point in Ingulf, p. 27: 'Alfredus . . . ciuitates suas et castella sua renouauit, turres et munitiones in locis magis necessariis construxit, ac totam terrae faciem in formam multo meliorem immutatam, per oppida murata, et alia loca munitissima contra barbaros insuperabilem fore fecit'; cf. Essays, pp. 141 ff.

analogous to the later knight's fee. This would give th king a nucleus of highly equipped troops, whom he coul moreover call out on his own authority, without goin through the form of consulting the Witan[1]. It ca hardly be a mere accident that, whereas in the records o Alfred's reign, the only mention of king's thanes hithert has been in connexion with the minor military operation of the great 'year of battles,' 871, in the annals 894– they are mentioned no less than six times.

(4) Greater mobility.

(4) These annals also furnish abundant evidence of tha increased mobility of the English forces which we hav already noticed. They also show

(5) Fortified positions carried.

(5) That the English had learned not only to mak fortifications, but to storm them[2]. After this preambl we return to the history of Alfred's last contest.

Battle of the Dyle.

§ 75. On November 1, 891[3], Arnulf, king of the Easter Franks, had defeated the Northmen in a brilliant engage ment on the Dyle, which freed the interior of Germany for ever from these foes. This, and the famine which prevailed on the Continent in 892 in consequence of a exceptionally severe winter, disgusted them with thei

Renewed invasion of England by the Danes.

continental quarters; and in the autumn of 892[4] a flee of 250 sail put forth from Boulogne, and entered the mouth of the then navigable river Lymne, drew thei ships four miles up the river, and, after capturing a unfinished[5] fort, entrenched themselves at Appledore

[1] Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 191; Essays, pp. 143 ff.; Green, C. E. pp. 135 ff.

[2] Chron. 894, i. 86–7.

[3] For this event the date in the Chronicle is apparently correct.

[4] See Dümmler, u. s. ii. 349 ff. The foreign Chronicles show clearly that the date is 892, not 893 as in the Saxon Chron.

[5] 'samworht,' 'half-wrought.' Mr. Macfadyen ingeniously connects this with the passage cited above from Asser, as to the difficulty which Alfred had in getting the fortifications constructed which he had ordered. For the justification of the sketch which follows I must refer to my notes to the Chronicle. The only point

ıortly after, a smaller detachment of eighty ships under æsten sailed into the estuary of the Thames, entered the vale, and fortified itself at Milton. In view of these ew encampments on English soil, Alfred, early in 893 94), exacted oaths from the Northumbrian and East nglian Danes, with hostages in addition from the latter, at they would take no part with the invaders. This is ıe first time that we have had mention of any dealings of lfred with the Northumbrian Danes, and it shows what ew possibilities were opening before him; while, on the her side, the important part which, in spite of their aths, the Northumbrian and East Anglian Danes took the following struggle, and the fact that the new in-aders brought their wives and children with them, prove at this was no mere predatory raid, but a deliberate and oncerted attempt to conquer England. Alfred with his yrd took up a position between the two Danish camps, so s to watch them both. Numerous small skirmishes took lace, but no general engagement. Meanwhile Alfred was egotiating with the smaller body of Danes at Milton; hom he may have thought to detach by making a separate greement with them. Hæsten entered into negotiations, nd even allowed his two sons to be baptised, Alfred him-elf and Æthelred of Mercia acting as sponsors. But on ıe part of Hæsten the negotiations were only a blind; indeed they had not been originally proposed by im with this object. While they were in progress, he rdered the Danes at Appledore to send their ships round o Benfleet in Essex, and themselves to break out in force, nd marching through Surrey, Hampshire, and Berkshire, ross the upper Thames, and then, turning eastwards, egain their ships at Benfleet, to which he himself now

A concerted attempt to conquer England.

Danish plan of campaign.

n which I have modified my view, is as to the position of But-ngton.

crossed, threw up a fortification, and occupied himself with harrying the districts, which had been ceded to Alfred by the settlement of 885 (886). This plan was put into execution. But though the Danes at Appledore succeeded in breaking out, they were pursued by the fyrd under Alfred's eldest son Edward[1], which overtook them (or, in the Chronicler's words, '*rode* before them'), compelled them to fight a general engagement at Farnham, in which the Danes were defeated, and driven in confusion across the Thames, and up the Hertfordshire Colne, where they took refuge in an island called Thorney[2], which the fyrd proceeded to blockade. Unfortunately at this crisis the term of service of Edward's division of the fyrd expired, and their provisions being exhausted they were forced to raise the blockade.

Battle of Farnham.

Alfred was on his way to relieve them with the other division of the fyrd, when he heard[3] that two fleets of Northumbrian and East Anglian Danes were operating in

The Danes

[1] It is only in Ethelwerd that Edward's share in the campaign is mentioned. He would now be a little over twenty, if, as Asser says, Alfred was married in 868, and Edward was his second child, 475 A [19], 485 C [42].

[2] This name also comes from Ethelwerd. Ramsay, Foundations of England, i. 261, sees in this the ancient name of Westminster; and a writer in the Athenaeum for June 15, 1901, takes the same view still more positively, saying that we shall search the Colne in vain for an island called Thorney. I imagine we should search the neighbourhood of Westminster with equally little success; and if the name has become extinct in one locality why not in the other? possibly because the thorns have become extinct which gave the name. Ethelwerd *may* be mistaken as to the name, but it is absolutely certain that the island on which the Danes were blockaded was in the Colne: 'hie flugon ofer Temese, . . . þa up be Colne on anne iggað. Þa besæt sio fierd hie.'

[3] To this year perhaps better than to any other would apply the very rhetorical description of Hen. Hunt., how messengers poured in upon the king, saying that the Danes were in this, that, and the other quarter, pp. 138, 139.

the west, the larger one of 100 ships besieging Exeter, the smaller one of forty ships besieging an unnamed fort on the coast of North Devon. Alfred at once hurried westward, detaching however a small force under Edward to watch the Danes at Thorney. Alfred was ultimately[1] successful in raising the siege of Exeter; the fate of the North Devon fort is not recorded. in the west.

Meanwhile Edward, reinforced by Æthelred from London, renewed the blockade of Thorney, the Danes having been unable to avail themselves of his temporary absence, owing to the fact that their chief had been wounded in the battle of Farnham. They had accordingly to submit and give hostages, and were then allowed to march off. Edward and Æthelred returned to London, and collecting reinforcements there and from the west, marched to Benfleet, which they found garrisoned by their former antagonists from Thorney; Hæsten himself with his division being away plundering. The fort was carried, the garrison put to flight, all the women, and children, and plunder captured; Hæsten's own wife and sons were among the captives, though either now or later Alfred chivalrously restored them, because of the relationship which baptism had created between them. The ships were burned or broken up, or carried off to London and Rochester. It was as complete a victory as could well be imagined. Edward reduces the Danes in Thorney. Capture of Benfleet.

§ 76. The defeated Danes fell back on Shoebury, where they were joined by Hæsten, and threw up another fortification. They then set out to march up the Thames, being joined by large reinforcements from Northumbria and East Anglia. The object of this move was probably

[1] The Chronicle seems to synchronise the relief of Exeter approximately with the capture of the fort at Benfleet; but Alfred was busied in the west some time longer, while the English forces were blockading Buttington, Chron. i. 87.

The Danes make a dash across England.

to co-operate with their friends in Devonshire agains Alfred's force. If so, it was frustrated. The three grea ealdormen, Æthelred of Mercia, Æthelnoth of Somerse and Æthelhelm of Wilts., 'with the thanes who were a home at the forts,' raised a levy, the extent of which, a Professor Earle has remarked[1], seems to astonish th Chronicler himself, 'from every burg east of Parret, we and east of Selwood, north of Thames, west of Severn with some of the North Welsh'; the co-operation of thes last being especially noteworthy. In view of these gathe

They are driven northwards,

ing forces the Danes were obliged to head off northward up the Severn valley, being finally overtaken at Buttington and blockaded on both sides of the river. The localit of this place has been much disputed; some authoritie placing it at Buttington Tump, at the junction of the Wy with the Severn, others identifying it with Buttington o the borders of Shropshire and Montgomeryshire. Contrar to my former opinion, I am now inclined to take the latte view; not because of Sir James Ramsay's objection tha the Severn is too wide to be blockaded at Buttington Tump for on that theory the river on which the Danes wer blockaded would be the Wye; but because the phrase o the Chronicler that the Danes marched 'up along Severn just as they had marched 'up along Thames,' seems t imply that they followed the Severn valley northward whereas to reach Buttington Tump they would have had t cross the Severn and turn south; and moreover, in tha case, their fleets in Devonshire would probably have mad some attempt to relieve them. However this may be, th English blockaded them for 'many weeks,' until they wer starved out, their horses having all died of hunger or bee

defeated at Buttington,

eaten. They then made a desperate attempt to brea through the English lines on the eastern side of the rive

[1] The Alfred Jewel, p. 104.

but were defeated with loss; those who escaped returning to Shoebury; then, leaving their ships, their women, and their booty in East Anglia, and drawing in large reinforcements from East Anglia and Northumbria, they made a sudden dash across England, marching 'without stopping[1] day or night,' till they reached the ruined Roman walls of Chester, where they fortified themselves for the winter. The fyrd failed to cut them off before they reached Chester, and the approach of winter and the heavy work already done probably prevented them from attempting another blockade; they therefore contented themselves with destroying everything in the neighbourhood from which the Danes could gather sustenance, and retired. Not since the great year of battles in 871 had there been such a bustling year in England, and what a different result!

and retire to Shoebury.

They winter at Chester,

§ 77. The measures taken by the English proved effective, for early in the next year, 894 (895), want of provisions forced the Danes to evacuate Chester, and withdraw into Wales, whence they retired to Mersea in Essex; 'marching through Northumbria and East Anglia, so as the fyrd might not reach them[2]'; words which give eloquent testimony to the changed state of things. At Mersea they were joined by the fleet from Exeter, which had been beaten off with heavy loss in an attempt which they had made on Chichester. At the end of this year and the beginning of the next, 895 (896), the Danes drew their ships up the Thames and Lea to a spot twenty miles above London, and there fortified themselves. An attempt by the garrison of London with other forces to storm the Danish lines failed; and so during harvest Alfred encamped in the

and retire to Essex.

They fortify themselves on the Lea,

[1] 'ánstreces,' literally 'at a stretch.'

[2] Can it be that the fyrd after all did reach them? Ethelwerd seems to say that Æthelnoth attacked the Danes at York, p. 518 E. Or is this a punitive expedition against the Northumbrian Danes?

neighbourhood to protect the inhabitants of the distric while they were reaping their corn. One day as he wa riding up the river, he noticed a spot where it seemed t him possible, by constructing obstacles on either side of th stream, to prevent the Danish ships from getting out He at once proceeded to put his plan into execution, bu he had hardly begun when the Danes realised that the were out-manœuvred, and abandoning their ships on more struck off for the upper waters of the Severn. Th fyrd pursued, but here again no attempt was made t blockade them, and the Danes wintered at Bridgenorth.

but are out-manœuvred.

Break-up of the Danish host.

The next summer, 896 (897), the Danish host broke u 'some to East Anglia, some to Northumbria. Those wh had no property [in England] got them ships and fare south over sea to the Seine.' The long campaign wa over. 'And through God's mercy,' says the Chronicler on more, 'the [Danish] host had not wholly ruined th Angle-kin, but they were much more ruined in those thre years with murrain of men and cattle, and with the los of many of the most excellent king's thanes who passe away in those three years.'

Alfred's new ships.

§ 78. The only thing that remained to be done was t suppress the predatory raids of Northumbrian and Eas Anglian ships on the south coasts of Wessex. With th object Alfred turned the constructive ability which he un doubtedly possessed to the building of a new type of shi

[1] Hen. Hunt. says 'fecit aquam Luye findi in tria brachia,' p. 150; i. e. he conceives the two obstacles as erected *in* the river, so dividing it into three channels, which is perfectly possible. Perhaps the worthy archdeacon may even have seen the remains of Alfred's works. But I cannot now take Steenstrup's view that this device may hav been suggested to Alfred by Or sius' account of the capture Babylon by Cyrus, Lib. ii. c. That was effected by divertin the course of the river, whic there is no reason to suppose th Alfred attempted.

just as Caesar did when he invaded Britain[1]. They were much larger in all their measurements than the wiking vessels, built neither on Frisian nor Danish lines, but according to the king's own ideas. To tell the honest truth, they do not seem to have been a great success. In an engagement between nine of the new ships and six wiking vessels in the neighbourhood of the Isle of Wight all the English ships got aground, 'very uncomfortably,' as the Chronicler quaintly says, six on one side of the strait and three on the other. Moreover at the end of the same annal it is recorded: 'and the same summer perished no less than twenty ships on the South Coast, crews and all'; so that the new ships do not seem to have been very capable of weathering a storm. We have noticed earlier naval operations of Alfred in the years 875, 877, 881 (882), 884 (885). I am, however, inclined to think that both Alfred's claims to be called the founder of the English navy, and also the previous disuse of the sea by the Saxons have been somewhat exaggerated. The mention of Frisians as fighting on the English side[2] in the naval engagement just referred to, shows indeed that Alfred was glad to avail himself of these skilled mariners, who had probably come over to England in consequence of the wiking settlements in

Not a great success.

Alfred's claim to be the founder of the English navy doubtful.

[1] Bell. Gall. v. 1.

[2] The connexion of the Frisian language with that of the Angles and Saxons was very close, and they have certain marked characteristics in common, pointing to close neighbourhood of their original abodes. Of English dialects the Frisian is nearest to Kentish, except in the northern Frisian islands, where it seems more akin to West-Saxon. I take this from Siebs, Zur Gesch. der engl.-fries. Sprache, in Paul's Grundriss der germanischen Philologie, and ed. i. 1153 ff., for a reference to which I am indebted to Professor Napier, who tells me that in his judgement Englishmen and Frisians would be quite intelligible to one another in the ninth century. There is a sentence of Frisian in Pertz, xxii. 576, which might just as well be Anglo-Saxon.

Frisia[1], just as the Danish descent on Wessex, in 878, drove many West Saxons to take refuge on the Continent. And Asser expressly mentions Frisians among those who settled under Alfred's rule[2]. There was certainly a naval engagement in 851, under Æthelwulf[3], in which the English were victorious, if not yet earlier in 833 and 840[4]. Still it is no doubt true that there was no fleet capable of safeguarding the English coasts. The silence of the Chronicle as to any later attacks may indicate that this was effected in Alfred's later years. Unhappily, for the last four years of Alfred's reign the Chronicle is silent as to almost everything. So the argument is at best precarious. The stress laid on the description of Alfred's new ships shows that he saw in this the necessary completion of his work for the defence of England; but did it really require such an immense amount of genius to discern that, as the invaders came by sea, it was desirable to stop them, if possible, before they got to land?

Earlier naval engagement.

§ 79. We are constantly being told that 'Peace hath her victories not less renowned than war.' But the victories

The problems of peace.

[1] In 882 Charles the Fat had granted West Friesland to a wiking Chief Guðfrið, Dümmler, u. s. ii. 204, 205; cf. ibid. 224 ff., 241; Weber, u. s. v. 684, 685. For earlier ravages in Frisia, cf. ibid. 495; Pertz, i. 445.

[2] 486 B [44]. Charles the Great also employed Frisians in his fleet for his wars against the Danes, Weber, u. s. p. 421; cf. Einhard, Vita Caroli, c. 17.

[3] Mr. Conybeare says: 'one MS. of the A.-S. Chronicle makes St. Neot [!!] (Athelstan of Kent) fight "on shipboard" in 851, but the entry, if correct, stands absolutely alone.' The fact is that the entry is found in five MSS. out of six. A is the only one which omits the words 'on scipum.'

[4] See notes to Chron., ad loc. It has, however, been pointed out to me by Mr. A. J. Wyatt, of Christ's College, Cambridge, that the phrase 'ahton wælstowe gewald' looks as if these battles were fought on land; and I admit that I cannot produce any certain instance of this phrase being applied to a naval victory. The provision that a merchant who fared thrice over sea on his own account should rank as a thane is unfortunately of uncertain date, Schmid, pp. lxiv, 390.

of peace are worthy of double renown when they have to be won, as in Alfred's case, from the ashes left by an exhausting war. For, as Alfred says himself, 'throughout all England everything was harried and burnt[1].'

The most needful of the works of peace is, as men have often learnt by bitter experience, to be prepared for war. Not only the works of peace, but peace itself, are impossible except under the guarantee of an adequate military and naval force. We have said enough already of Alfred's efforts to reorganise his kingdom on this side.

Civil reorganisation.

Much too would be needed in the way of civil reorganisation, especially in the non-West-Saxon districts which had been won from the Danes. And this fact is probably the basis of the legend which makes Alfred the inventor of shires, hundreds, and tithings[2]. Indeed, in the districts which previously had formed part of Mercia, it is probable that the shire system was introduced for the first time, either now or a little later. For, as Mr. Taylor has pointed out[3], whereas every existing shire division south of the Thames is mentioned in the oldest MS. of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle before the first change of hand at the year 892, there is no mention of any Mercian shire in any MS. of the Chronicle prior to 1000. Legislation too would be required, though we must always remember that legislation, as we understand it, played a very small part

The shire system.

Legislation not very important in early times.

[1] Preface to Pastoral Care. Cf. the description of the Lombard ravages in the translation of the Dialogues, p. 258: 'nu syndon þa burga forhergode . . . 7 þa ceastra toworpene, cyrcan forbærnde 7 mynstra toworpene, 7 eac gehwylce tunas ge wera ge wifa fram hæþenum mannum geweste, 7 eac fram ælce þigonge þis land ligeð tolysed 7 idlað in westenne. ne eardað nænig agend frea, ac wild-deor abysgiað þa stowe, þa ær hæfde 7 eardode manna mænigo.'

[2] So Freeman, in Dict. Nat. Biog. i. 156; cf. S. C. H. i. 99, 100; 'occasione barbarorum etiam indigenae in rapinas anhelauerant,' W. M. i. 129.

[3] Rev. C. S. Taylor, Origin of the Mercian Shires, p. 3.

in Anglo-Saxon times. The idea of a code or body of statutes covering all departments of civil life was quite foreign to their notions, and every attempt to explain the existing Anglo-Saxon laws on any such hypothesis must be a failure. Into the details of Alfred's laws I do not propose to enter. To do so with any profit would require more space than I can afford, and a minuter knowledge of the earlier and later laws than I can pretend to. Indeed, I must confess that the study of the Anglo-Saxon laws often reduces me to a state of mental chaos. I may know, as a rule, the meaning of individual words; I can construe, though not invariably, the separate sentences. But what it all comes to is often a total mystery. The reason (apart from my own shortcomings) is to be sought in the fact alluded to above, that a very small part of Anglo-Saxon life and institutions is to be found in the laws, which imply a whole body of unwritten custom, of which only the most salient changes are registered in the laws. And as this body of unwritten custom is, to a large extent, beyond our reach, it is not surprising that the written law, to which it was the key, should often be obscure.

Alfred's laws probably passed late in his reign.

§ 80. The date of Alfred's laws is unfortunately nowhere given. But it must be comparatively late in his reign. The introduction consists, as is well known, largely of passages taken from the Old and New Testaments, translated from the Vulgate with a degree of skill and freedom, which seems to imply some practice in the work of translation and adaptation, which, as we shall see, Alfred probably did not begin at any rate before the year 887 [1]. We may therefore conjecture that the enactment of these laws should be placed either just before, or just after the last great

[1] Below, § 90. Cf. M. H. Turk, The Legal Code of Alfred the Great, pp. 50, 51 (a very useful monograph); Schmid, Gesetze, pp. xxxvii ff.

struggle with the Danes, 892–6; for William of Malmesbury's statement that while, as a rule, 'inter arma silent leges,' Alfred carried on his legislation amid the din of war[1], need not be taken for more than the rhetorical flourish which it evidently is.

Points of interest connected with them.

One or two points in the preface and in the laws may just be briefly noted. In the former there is an interesting mistranslation of the fifth commandment, the feminine relative in the last clause: 'which the Lord thy God giveth thee,' being taken to refer not to land (terra) but to mother (matrem); 'honour thy father and thy mother whom the Lord gave thee[2].' Was it the thankful thought of his own noble mother Osburh which prompted this mistake?

The insertion among the causes which excuse the non-return of a deposit, of the case of its having been captured by the enemy[3], throws light on the circumstances of the time, as does the provision of one of the laws that, for certain offences, the punishment is doubled when the 'fyrd' is out[4]. Characteristic too of the times is the fact that treason against the lord is 'boot-less[5],' i. e. incapable of being atoned for by money-payment, and the provision against harbouring the king's fugitives[6]. Nor is it

[1] 'licet enim, ut quidam ait, leges inter arma sileant, ille inter fremitus armorum leges tulit,' Gesta Regum, i. 129; cf. Robert of Gloucester, i. 392: 'Vor þey me segge þat lawes beþ in worre tyme uorlore, Nas it noȝt so bi is daye, vor þei he in worre were, Lawes he made riȝtuolore and strengore þen er were.' Cf. Chron. Rames., p. 13: 'Alfredus rex Anglicarum legum conditor.'

[2] Turk, u. s. p. 35.

[3] 'þæt it here name,' Turk, p. 74; Schmid, p. 62; 'here' is the regular name for the Danish, as 'fyrd' is for the native host.

[4] Turk, p. 100; Schmid, p. 94.

[5] Turk, p. 82; Schmid, p. 66; Alfred's idea that it was Christianity which first allowed money-compensation for offences is interesting, though unhistorical. The same idea occurs Oros. 48, 32.

[6] Turk, p. 84; Schmid, p. 72.

surprising that Alfred the truth-teller should be specially severe against falsehood; if any man commits folk-leasing, i.e. public slander, he is to suffer no lighter punishment than the loss of the offending member [1].

At the end of the Apostolic letter, which Alfred translates from Acts xv, is found a version of the golden rule in its negative form, 'that which ye would not that other men should do to you, do not ye to other men [2].' This is not, as is often alleged [3], an insertion made by Alfred from the Sermon on the Mount [4], but is an addition to the text of Acts, found in some Greek and Old Latin MSS., from the latter of which it passed into some MSS. of the Vulgate [5]. Most characteristic of Alfred's thought is the comment: 'by this one law any one may know how he ought to judge another; he needs no other law book.'

Alfred's administration of justice.

§ 81. Asser gives a striking picture [6], which there is no reason to distrust, of the pains which Alfred took to secure a good administration of justice, and especially to 'see that such as are in need and necessity have right.' From this point of view we can understand Alfred's recasting the precept of Exodus xxiii. 3: 'pauperis quoque non misereberis in iudicio,' 'neither shalt thou favour a poor man in his cause' (R.V.). The warning that justice is no more to be wrested in favour of the poor, than of the rich, is one not unneeded now. But undue favouring of the poor was a remote danger in Alfred's day, when, as Asser says, the poor had few helpers, or none, besides the king [7]. And so Alfred puts the precept in a general form: 'Judge thou very equally, judge not one judgement for the rich, and

[1] Turk, p. 96; Schmid, p. 88.
[2] Turk, p. 80; Schmid, p. 66.
[3] e. g. by Schmid, p. xxxix.
[4] Matt. vii. 12, which gives the rule in its positive, and not in its negative form.
[5] Turk, pp. 37, 38.
[6] 497 A–D [69–71].
[7] 497 A [69].

another for the poor[1].' And it would seem from Asser's account that he kept a control on the local administration of justice, not only by constantly hearing appeals himself, but also by a system of special envoys analogous to the Carolingian 'missi dominici,' and to the later 'justices in eyre[2].'

Alfred's accessibility to suitors.

Of Alfred's accessibility as the fountain of justice a very pleasant picture is given in a document addressed to Edward the Elder detailing the progress of a suit which had come before his father Alfred: 'we went in to the king and told him how we proposed to settle the matter, and the king stood and washed his hands at Wardour within the bower, and when he had finished, he asked us[3],' and so forth. It reminds us of the sketch which Josephus gives of Philip, tetrarch of Ituraea, almost the only amiable member of the odious Herod family; how he would stroll through his little state, with a chariot following him on which was his curule chair, and if any of his subjects approached him with their causes, he would at once have the chair brought forward, and sit and give his judgement there and then[4]. It reminds us still more of the great Charles, of whom Einhard relates: 'When he was putting on his shoes or dressing, he would not only admit his friends, but also, if the Count of the Palace reported that there was some suit which could not be settled without his command, he would have the parties brought in at once, and, as if sitting in his tribunal, would hear the matter, and give his decision[5].' The satisfaction given by Alfred's decisions appears not

[1] Turk, p. 78; Schmid, p. 64.

[2] 'omnia . . . iudicia, quae in sua absentia fiebant . . . inuestigabat; . . . iudices aut per se ipsum, aut per . . . suos fideles . . . interrogabat,' 497 C [70]; cf. Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 183, 205, 208, 391; Pauli, König Ælfred, p. 179.

[3] Birch, No. 591; K. C. D. No. 328.

[4] Josephus, Ant. xviii. 4, 6; cf. Schürer, Gesch. des jüdischen Volkes, i. 356.

[5] Einhard, Vita Caroli, c. 24.

only from Asser's panegyric, but also from the document already cited, where the writer continues: 'And, sire, if every judgement which King Alfred gave is to be upset, when shall we come to any conclusion?'

Alfred's laws drawn mainly from earlier sources.

§ 82. The last section of the Preface to the Laws which tells how Alfred gathered these laws from older sources, and rejected others, with the advice of his Witan, not daring to add to them many of his own, which might not be suitable to after ages[1], has been often quoted as an illustration of Alfred's wise conservatism. It is also the best illustration that we have of the action of the Witenagemót in his reign. Others may be found in the charters, but charters, as we have seen[2], are not numerous. The most interesting illustration is to be found in Alfred's will, which shows how anxious Alfred was not to bring any undue influence to bear upon his councillors. The will tells us how in a Witenagemót at Long Dean[3] the provisions of Æthelwulf's will and the agreements made between Alfred and his brothers were recited, in order that the Witan might judge whether Alfred's proposed disposition of his property was in harmony with these: 'Then prayed I them all for my love, and gave them my pledge, that I would never bear any grudge against any for what they might conscientiously decide, and that none for love or fear of me should hesitate to declare the law of

Action of the Witenagemót under Alfred.

[1] Cf. the very striking parallel of Charles the Great: 'cum adueterat multa legibus populi sui deesse, nam Franci duas habent leges [i. e. the Salic and Ripuarian] in plurimis locis ualde diuersas, cogitauit quae deerant addere, et discrepantia unire, praua quoque . . . corrigere; sed de his nihil aliud ab eo factum est, nisi quod pauca capitula . . . legibus addidit,' ibid. c. 29.

[2] Above, § 11.

[3] Probably Long Dean, three miles from Swanborough Tump, which is between Pewsey and Woodborough, Wilts. [I give this statement as I find it, but I have searched the six-inch Ordnance map in vain.]

the case[1].' The Chronicle does not mention a single meeting of the Witan; and though it would be wrong to argue from this silence, for the same is true of many other reigns, yet it is probable that the circumstances of the time, combined with Alfred's character and ability, would tend to throw more power into the hands of the king, and to reduce proportionally the importance of the Witenagemót[2].

Obscurity of ecclesiastical history under Alfred.

§ 83. Of synods or special ecclesiastical legislation I can find no trace under Alfred. More than one bishop's see became temporarily or permanently extinct owing to the ravages of the Danes[3]. The monasteries 'once filled,' as Alfred says, 'with treasures and books[4]' were favourite objects of attack. In the Preface to the Cura Pastoralis Alfred thanks God for 'the learned bishops which we now have'; but, with the exception of the two archbishops of Canterbury, Æthelred and Plegmund, Werferth of Worcester, and Asser, it is hard to say anything about any of them. It is the same with the abbots. Thorne, the historian of St. Augustine's, Canterbury, gives a list of abbots about this time, but he can say nothing as to any of them[5]. Beyond the broad fact of the ruin caused by the ravages of the Danes, the whole history of the Church under Alfred is most obscure[6]. This does not mean that there is any truth in Ailred of Rievaulx' myth[7] that Alfred regarded it as a king's chief dignity to have no power in the Churches of Christ. What little evidence there is points distinctly the other way[8]. There is a curious letter of Pope John VIII to Archbishop Æthelred[9] in which

Alfred's relation to the Church.

[1] Birch, No. 553; K. C. D. No. 314; and elsewhere.

[2] This is specially noticeable in the matter of grants of land, Stubbs, Const. Hist. i. 193.

[3] Stubbs, u. s. i. 129, 130, 240.

[4] Preface to Pastoral Care.

[5] Col. 1777.

[6] 'the veil of ninth-century darkness,' Stubbs, u. s. i. 236.

[7] Ed. Migne, col. 719.

[8] Cf. Pauli, p. 153.

[9] Mansi, Concilia, xvii. 54; Jaffé, Reg. Pont. p. 270; Chron. ii. 87.

he says: 'We admonish you to set yourself as a wall for the house of God not only against the king, but also against all who are minded to act perversely.' There seems some ground for Sir John Spelman's remark: 'The life and ways of Alfred were not perfectly pleasing to the Fathers of Rome[1].' A letter, from Archbishop Fulk of Rheims to Æthelred's successor, Plegmund[2], shows that clerical and episcopal marriages were common in England at that time; and there are traces of something like hereditary succession to ecclesiastical lands[3]. There is no evidence that Alfred attempted to alter this state of things; there is some evidence that he disapproved it. In the Soliloquies of St. Augustine, the Anglo-Saxon translation of which[4] is almost certainly by Alfred[5], there is a passage in which Augustine declares that he has no desire to marry. This, which in the original is purely personal to Augustine, is by the translator extended to all clergy: 'I say however that it is better for priests not to marry than to marry[6].'

Decline of monasticism.

Alfred made some attempt to revive the monastic life in England. He built a monastery for men at Athelney[7], no doubt as a thank-offering for the deliverance there begun, and a convent for women at Shaftesbury[8]; he also made

[1] Spelman's Life of Alfred, ed. Hearne, pp. 219 ff. I owe the reference to Mr. Macfadyen.

[2] Pertz, xiii. 566–8; W. M. II. xlvii.

[3] Birch, No. 582; K. C. D. No. 327.

[4] First printed by Cockayne in The Shrine; reprinted in Englische Studien, xviii, where the pagination of Cockayne's edition is retained. I cite the pages of Cockayne's edition.

[5] See below, § 115.

[6] 'ic cwæče þeah þæt hyt si preostum betere, næbbe ðonne hæbbe,' [sc. wif], p. 183; so in the Orosius, 290, 1. 2, Alfred strongly condemns the compelling of monks to military service.

[7] Asser, 493 C [60].

[8] Ibid. 495 A [64]. W. M. says that in the Nuns' Chapterhouse at Shaftesbury was a stone, transferred thither from the walls of the town, with this inscription: 'Anno Dom. Inc. Elfredus rex fecit hanc urbem DCCCLXXX°. regni suo VIII°,' G. P. p. 187 (cf. Lib. de Hyda, p. 49, which reads 're-

arrangements, though he did not live to carry them out, for founding the New Minster at Winchester[1]. But he had but small success. The taste for the monastic life had almost been extinguished among men in England; and of the two contradictory causes which Asser suggests[2] for this fact, viz. the Danish ravages, and the too great riches of the English, which caused them to despise the monastic life, there can be no doubt that the former is nearer the truth. Alfred had accordingly to fill his monasteries with foreign monks. The result was not always satisfactory, if there is any truth in Asser's story[3] how two of these foreign monks at Athelney tried to murder their abbot, John the Old Saxon. Besides his own foundations, Alfred was a liberal contributor to other monasteries, not only in England, but also in Ireland and on the Continent[4]. Yet there is no monastic halo round the head of Alfred, like that which adorns his great-grandson Edgar.

parauit' for 'fecit'). This shows that Shaftesbury was one of Alfred's 'burgs,' and it occurs in the Burghal Hidage with a territory of 700 hides, Maitland, Domesday, p. 503. It certainly has a most commanding position.

[1] See the document by which Edward acquires land for carrying out his father's intentions, Birch, No. 605; K. C. D. No. 1087. The so-called 'golden charter' of foundation 'pro anima patris mei Alfredi regis *totius Anglie* [!] *primi coronati*,' is a flagrant forgery, Birch, No. 602, K. C. D. No. 336; cf. Liber de Hyda, pp. xxiii ff.

[2] 493 D [61].

[3] 494 [62–64].

[4] Asser, 496 A, B [67]; cf. Einhard, c. 27, for similar liberality on the part of Charles the Great towards foreign Christians.

LECTURE V

CIVIL ADMINISTRATION (*continued*) EDUCATION; LITERARY WORKS

Finance.

§ 84. THAT Alfred would be a careful and exact steward of all the resources of his kingdom, we may assume without any proof. But, for my own part, I wholly and entirely distrust the account which Asser gives[1] of the minute and mathematical divisions and subdivisions of revenue instituted by Alfred. I regard it as an indication that at this point of his work Asser was attacked by an acute fit of imagination[2]. Dr. Stubbs has said that there is no point on which we are more in the dark than on the financial system of the Anglo-Saxons[3]. We must also remember that since so much of the revenue of an Anglo-Saxon king was payable in kind, there was much less room for finance, in the strict sense of the word, than in more modern states.

Of Alfred's interest and skill in mechanical and artistic inventions enough has perhaps been said already[4]. Under this head would come the well-known story of the candles and the lantern shades[5]. I cannot myself go into raptures over this, as some writers profess to do. But the mention

[1] 495 C-496 B [65-67].

[2] The 'Modus tenendi Parliamenti' (Stubbs' Charters, pp. 502 ff.) is a curious instance of a purely imaginary constitution giving itself out as historical. It *may* be as old as Edward I's reign; if so, as Gneist says, 'es würde nur dann beweisen dass es schon damals Ideologen des Feudalismus gab,' Verwaltungsrecht, p. 393.

[3] Const. Hist. i. 105, 143.

[4] Above, §§ 35, 78.

[5] Asser, 496 C-E [68, 69].

of tents[1] in connexion with this invention, may perhaps indicate that it was specially during campaigns that the need of some such contrivance would be felt. It is one of the many curious parallels between things English and Frankish, that Pope Paul I sent to Pippin, the father of Charles the Great, an instrument for showing the time at night[2].

§ 85. Of Alfred's intercourse with foreign nations Asser[3] gives a 'heightened and telling' picture, speaking of 'daily embassies of nations who dwell from the Tyrrhene Sea to the furthest bound of Ireland.' Of relations of Alfred with the Irish princes[4] I have found no evidence. But an interesting and pathetic instance of accidental intercourse with Ireland is given in the Chronicle under 891: 'In this year three "Scots" (i. e. Irishmen) came to Alfred king, on a boat without oars or rudder. They had stolen away from Ireland, because they would be for God's love on pilgrimage, they recked not where. The boat on which they fared was wrought of two and a half hides, and they took with them meat for a sevennight. And at the end of a sevennight they came to land in Cornwall, and straightway fared to Alfred king. Thus were they named, Dubslane, and Macbeth, and Maelinmain.' The story is most genuine, and redolent through and through of the spirit of Irish History and Saga. The love of pilgrimage

Intercourse with other nations.

Ireland.

Irish love

[1] 'tentoriorum tenuitates.'

[2] Weber, Weltgesch., v. 298; Oelsner, Jahrbücher des fränkischen Reiches unter K. Pippin, p. 347: 'direximus [uobis] . . . libros . . . insimul artem gramaticam . . . geometricam . . . omnes Greco eloquio scriptas, necnon et horologium nocturnum.' Cf. also the very curious account given by Einhard, Annals, ad ann. 807, of a striking clock given to Charles by the king of Persia, cited in Hazlitt's edition of Warton's History of English Poetry, i. 197.

[3] 492 C [58]; cf. Einhard, Vita Car., c. 16.

[4] Of Charles it is said: 'Scotorum reges habuit ad suam uoluntatem,' ibid.

of pilgrimage.

became a passion in the Irish Church[1]; the Irish Sagas and the lives of the Irish Saints furnish many illustrations of this desire for exile, this self-abandonment (as they deemed it) to the will of God involved in committing themselves to the deep in a frail skin-covered coracle without oarage or steerage, the slender provision of food for the voyage. In the Book of Leinster is a story how three young Irish clerics set out on a pilgrimage; 'they took as provision on the sea only three loaves. "In the name of Christ" (said they), "let us throw our oars into the sea, and let us commend ourselves to our Lord."' So in the voyage of Maelduin, the Irish Saga so well known to English readers through Tennyson's poem, Maelduin and his companions exclaim: 'leave the boat alone, and cease rowing; whither God wills it to be borne, He will bear it[2].' According to Ethelwerd[3], these 'Scots' after leaving Alfred went on to Rome and Jerusalem; and if so, it may well be that this was one of the channels whereby Alfred communicated with the East; for we have seen[4] that Alfred's intercourse with Elias III, patriarch of Jerusalem, rests on very good evidence.

A ninth century pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

§ 86. It so happens that we have an account[5] of a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, made just twenty-five years earlier, by a Frankish monk named Bernard, who, with two companions, a Spanish and an Italian monk, set out from Rome about the year 865 with the blessing of Pope Nicholas (c. 1). From Rome they went to Bari, then 'a city of the Saracens,' from the 'sultan' of which they obtained letters

[1] The Life of St. Gall, written in this very century, says: 'nationi Scotorum consuetudo peregrinandi iam paene in naturam conuersa est,' Pertz, ii. 30; cf. Bede, ii. 170.

[2] See Chron. ii. 103–105, where these and other instances are collected.

[3] 517 E.

[4] Above, § 27.

[5] Printed in Tobler, Descriptiones Terrae Sanctae, and elsewhere.

to the rulers of Alexandria and Egyptian Babylon, i. e. Old Cairo (c. 3). From Bari they walked to Taranto, where they found six ships proceeding to Alexandria with a cargo of 9,000 Christian captives from Beneventum (c. 4). The admiral refused, however, to let them land, until they had paid a ransom of six 'aurei' (c. 5). And when they presented the letters of the sultan of Bari to the governour of Alexandria they helped them not a whit; and only on paying thirteen 'denarii'[1] apiece were they sent on by water with letters to the governour of Cairo (c. 6). Here the same fate awaited them. In spite of all their letters they were thrown into prison, but on payment of another thirteen 'denarii' per head they were released, and furnished with letters which did really prove effective, though they had to get them sealed, or, as we should say, they had to have their passports visaed in every town which they passed through, and this meant ever fresh exactions (c. 7). From Cairo they turned north by the Damietta branch of the Nile and proceeded by Tanis (c. 8) to Farama[2], the traditional abode of the Holy Family, where they procured camels on which they crossed the desert (c. 9) to El Arisch, and so by Gaza, Ramleh, and Emmaus to Jerusalem, where the patriarch was Theodosius, the immediate predecessor of Alfred's correspondent, Elias III. Here they lodged in the hospice founded for pilgrims by 'the glorious Emperor Charles,' near which was the church of St. Mary with a noble library of books, also given by Charles (c. 10). After visiting the holy places (cc. 11–18), they returned all the way by sea, having an unfavourable

with me,

[1] The nominal amount was however really doubled, because the Saracens insisted on the money being paid by weight, and not by tale.

[2] At the mouth of the Pelusiac branch of the Nile, which is now silted up, St. Martin, Dict. Géogr.

of pilgrimage

passage of sixty days to Mont' Auro (c. 19), whence they returned to Rome, 'where innumerable bodies of the saints repose' (c. 20). In some ways, apparently, a pilgrimage to Rome was more dangerous than one to Jerusalem. There is good peace, says the writer, between Christians and pagans both in Egypt and Jerusalem, though they are very strict on all travellers who have no passports (c. 22). In Romagna, on the other hand, things were very bad and brigands so numerous, that pilgrims had to go in bands and fully armed (c. 23).

I have thought it worth while to give an outline of this most interesting little tract, because it shows us the route taken, and the difficulties encountered, by a pilgrim to Jerusalem in the reign of Alfred's immediate predecessor [1].

Earliest recorded instance of intercourse between England and India.

But Alfred's messengers went further East than Palestine. I have already quoted the passage from the Chronicle which tells how in 883 Alfred sent alms to India to St. Thomas and St. Bartholomew, in fulfilment of the vow which he made 'when they encamped against the Danes at London.' On the route taken by these messengers I can unfortunately throw no light. But the entry is of transcendent interest. It is the first recorded instance of a connexion between England and Hindustan, a connexion which has meant so much to India and to England; for it is, I venture to think, to her government of India that England largely owes the position in the world which she holds to day.

Intercourse

Of missions and alms sent to Rome by Alfred five instances [2] are recorded in the Chronicle, and probably

[1] St. Willibald in the preceding century (circa 720), took a very different route. I give the principal stages only: The Seine, Rouen, Gorthonicum (?), Lucca, Rome, Naples, Syracuse, Monemvasia, Cos, Samos, Ephesus, Miletus, Cape Chelidonium, Cyprus, Emesa, Damascus, Jerusalem. This also is printed in Tobler, u. s.

[2] 883, 887, 888, 889, 890.

here were many others not recorded, for the omission of a formal embassy seems to be noted as exceptional [1]. with Rome,

Of intercourse with the Frankish empire we shall have some illustrations when we come to speak of the foreign scholars imported by Alfred. and the Frankish empire.

§ 87. But of all the objects which Alfred had in view the one probably to which he attached most importance was, in the words of our University bidding-prayer, 'a succession of persons duly qualified for the service of God in Church and State.' In a passage in the Consolation of Philosophy [2] Boethius says to his instructress: 'Thou knowest that ambition never was my mistress, though I did desire materials for carrying out my task'; 'which task,' adds Alfred, in his own words [3], 'was that I should virtuously and fittingly administer the authority committed to me. Now no man . . . can . . . administer government, unless he have fit tools and the raw material to work upon. . . . And a king's raw material and instruments of rule are a well-peopled land, and he must have men of prayer, men of war, and men of work. . . . Without these tools he cannot perform any of the tasks entrusted to him.' Alfred's need of trained subordinates.

It was with a view to providing these necessary 'tools,' that Alfred seems to have established, probably after the example of Charles the Great [4], a Court school, for the education specially of the sons of the upper classes, in which books of both languages, Latin and Saxon, were read, especially the Psalms and Saxon poems, and writing also was taught; and to these studies the pupils applied Court school.

[1] 889.

[2] Lib. ii. Prosa vii.

[3] Anglo-Saxon Version, ch. xvii; ed. Sedgefield, p. 40; the translation which follows is taken mainly from Mr. Sedgefield's handy rendering of Alfred's version into modern English, in which the passages added by Alfred to his original are very conveniently indicated by italics, p. 41.

[4] For Charles' Court school cf. Weber, v. 392 ff.

themselves, till they were old enough to learn 'hunting' and other arts, befitting well-born men.'

This account of Asser[1] agrees well with the wish expressed by Alfred in the Preface to the Pastoral Care: 'That all the freeborn youth of England who have sufficient means to devote themselves thereto, be set to learning so long as they are not strong enough for any other occupation, until such time as they can well read English writing. Let those be taught Latin whom it is proposed to educate further, and promote to higher office.' This passage is most interesting; but we must not, on the strength of it, bring Alfred into court as an advocate either for or against classical education. On the one hand Alfred clearly wished that all who had the time and means should be taught Latin; on the other hand Latin was then, as it is not now, the sole vehicle of Western culture and science.

Want of teachers supplied by Mercia,

§ 88. But the great difficulty was to find teachers. Of England, the part which had suffered least from the ravages of the Danes was Western Mercia; moreover Offa had had a real desire to promote learning in his kingdom, as Alcuin's letters show[2]; and from Mercia came Plegmund[3], whom Alfred ultimately made archbishop of Canterbury in succession to Æthelred, Werferth, the faithful bishop of Worcester, and two priests, Æthelstan and Werwulf, whom Alfred made his chaplains. The fact that Asser applies to these two last the term 'sacerdotes,' which, as I have elsewhere shown, is ambiguous in mediaeval Latin, sometimes meaning bishops, sometimes priests[4], has led Roger of Wendover

[1] 485 D–486 C [42–44], 496 A [67].

[2] Writing to Offa Alcuin says: 'ualde mihi placet quod tantam habetis intentionem lectionis, ut lumen sapientiae luceat in regno uestro, quod multis modo extinguitur in locis. Vos estis decus Britanniae, tuba praedicationis, gladius contra hostes, scutum contra inimicos,' Monumenta Alcuiniana, p. 265.

[3] 'Pleimundus . . . magister Elfredi regis,' G. P. p. 20.

[4] Bede, ii. 55, 56. To avoid th

not only to convert these priests into bishops, but to give them sees at Hereford and Leicester[1]; another illustration of the way in which myths arise. From Wales Alfred got Asser, as we have seen. But Britain alone could not supply Alfred's needs; and the Frankish empire was now to repay to England some small portion of the debt which it owed for Boniface and Alcuin, in the persons of Grimbald and John the Old Saxon. Of the latter not much is known[2]. He was a monk of Corvey, and was made by Alfred abbot of his new monastery of Athelney. The story of his attempted murder there has been already alluded to[3]. The date of his coming to England is not known. The chronology of Grimbald's life is also very obscure. Mabillon indeed was led to postulate two Grimbalds, who both came to England under Alfred. But his perplexity was largely caused by his acceptance of the Oxford interpolation in Asser as genuine; and his solution is quite incredible. Grimbald was a monk of St. Bertin's in Flanders. He held various offices in that monastery, and in 892, on the death of Abbot Rudolf, the monks wished him to become their abbot; but with a view of protecting the monastery against the attacks of Count Baldwin of Flanders, Fulk, archbishop of Rheims, who had been abbot before Rudolf, was allowed to resume the abbacy, and hold it with his archbishopric[4]. If all this is true, Grimbald cannot have come to England much before 893, and as he is mentioned in the Preface to the Pastoral Care as one of

Wales,

and the Frankish empire.

John the Old Saxon.

Grimbald.

ambiguity Lupus of Ferrières uses the expression 'sacerdos secundi ordinis,' Vita S. Wigberti, c. 5.

[1] R. W. i. 324; he alters Werwulf's name into Werebert, probably because there was a bishop of Leicester of that name early in the ninth century. There was an Athelstan bishop of Hereford early in the eleventh century. This may give us an idea of Wendover's critical skill.

[2] See Stubbs, W. M. II. xlviii.

[3] Above, p. 129.

[4] W. M. II. xliv ff.

Alfred's helpers in that work (along with Plegmund, Asser, and John), it is obvious that this date for Grimbald's arrival in England, if it be regarded as established, will have a very important bearing on the chronology of Alfred's writings [1]. There is a letter extant [2] which purports to be Fulk of Rheims' answer to Alfred's application for Grimbald. Certainly, if Fulk was holding the abbacy of St. Bertin's at this time, he would be the natural person to give permission to a monk of that house to leave his cloister [3], and Dr. Stubbs thought that the MSS. in which the letter is found were sufficiently ancient to exclude the suspicion of forgery. Its authenticity has however been doubted [4], and I confess it presents one very great difficulty to my mind. The letter throughout is written on the assumption that Grimbald is to be a bishop in England; he is to be placed over the care of pastoral rule, he is already a priest, and is worthy of pontifical honour; if Alfred will send Grimbald's electors and certain leading men in Church and State, Fulk will then ordain him (i. e. as bishop, for he was already priest), and they can escort him to his proper see [5]. Alfred is represented as having stated in his application that, owing to the ravages of the Danes, the lapse of time, the carelessness of prelates, and

Letter of Archbishop Fulk to Alfred.

Question of its genuineness.

[1] Johannes Longus, a later chronicler of St. Bertin's, says that Grimbald came to England in consequence of the murder of Fulk, archbishop of Rheims, Pertz, xxv. 769; as the date of this was 900, the date of Grimbald's arrival would be thrown to the very end of Alfred's reign. The Liber de Hyda, p. 30, says that Grimbald was sent for by advice of Archbishop Æthelred. This would make the invitation at least as early as 889. And the same authority, p. 35, places his arrival in 885. But I do not attach much weight to any of these statements.

[2] Printed in Wise's edition of Asser, pp. 123 ff., Birch, ii. 190 ff., and elsewhere.

[3] 'nostrum est uobis illum canonice concedere,' Wise, p. 128.

[4] e. g. by Pauli, u. s. p. 195; AA. SS. July, ii. 652.

[5] Wise, pp. 127, 128.

he ignorance of the people, ecclesiastical order had much lecayed in England[1], which is true enough, whoever wrote t. But there is no other evidence anywhere of any intenion of making Grimbald a bishop. Dean Hook's idea[2] hat Alfred intended to make him archbishop of Canterbury, but finding the appointment of a foreigner unpopular, substituted Plegmund, has not a scrap of evidence to support it; while if Grimbald did not come to England till 893 the primacy had long been filled up. Ultimately Grimbald was made abbot of the New Minster at Winchester, where he died in 903, and became one of the tutelary saints of that foundation, winning a place in the English Calendar[3]. The tradition that Asser was one of the embassy sent to escort Grimbald to England has been already alluded to[4].

Alfred's translations;

§ 89. But it was not only by educational institutions whether in Court or monastery that Alfred endeavoured to raise the culture of his people. The art of translation, which he had practised at first for his own instruction and edification, he came afterwards to use in order to place within reach of his people[5] the most useful works in different branches of knowledge. The object which Alfred had in view is clearly laid down in the oft-quoted Preface to the Pastoral Care. After tracing the practical extinction of the knowledge of Latin south of the Thames[6], which

their object.

[1] Wise, p. 124.

[2] Lives of the Archbishops of Canterbury, i. 322.

[3] St. Grimbald's mass day (July 8) is mentioned in the Chron. 1075 D ad init. See Chron. ii. 122, 123.

[4] Above, p. 18.

[5] 'inde perplures instituere studuit,' Asser, 592 A [56].

[6] South of the Thames Alfred did not know a single priest at the time of his accession, who knew Latin; south of the Humber there were very few; north of the Humber he does not think there were many. This confirms the view taken above, that Mercia was at this time intellectually the least backward part of England. The reference to Northumbria implies rather Alfred's lack of

made all the knowledge contained in that language inaccessible to a degree which would have seemed inconceivable to previous generations, he continues: 'therefore it seems to me best, if you agree[1], that we should translate some books, those namely which are most necessary for all men to know, into the language which we all understand.'

Story how Alfred began to translate.

§ 90. The story how Alfred first began to combine translation with reading[2] is told in a well-known passage of Asser[3]. He relates how one day, while the king and himself were reading and talking together, Alfred was much struck by a passage in the work which Asser was reading to him, and begged him to write it down for him in the little book of psalms and prayers which he always carried about with him. Asser suggested that it would be better to start a separate book for such extracts, and went and fetched a quire of parchment, and in course of time the book of translated extracts grew, until it reached nearly the size of a Psalter. Alfred called it his Encheiridion, Manual, or Handbook[4], because he always kept it close at hand. This according to Asser took place in the year 887.

The Handbook.

A great deal of unnecessary mystery has been made about this Handbook. Asser's account shows that it was simply what we should call a commonplace book. In the course of years Alfred may have made more than one such commonplace book. The one started at Asser's suggestion

accurate information, than any strong belief that things were very much better there.

[1] 'forðy me ðyncð betre, gif iow swa ðyncð,' p. 7; cf. Solil. p. 169: 'gyf þe nu þincð swa swa me þincð.'

[2] It is the combination of reading *with translation* that is new. The passage must not be interpreted as if Alfred now for the first time began to read Latin.

[3] Asser, 491 C–492 B [55–57].

[4] 'enchiridion ... id est manualis liber,' Asser; the equivalent Saxon 'handbóc' is found in some MSS. of W. M., i. 132 note.

ontained, according to him, 'flosculi diuinae scripturae'; hat is, probably, extracts from the Bible and the Fathers. But other parts of the volume, or, it may be, a later volume f the same kind, contained historical jottings; for William f Malmesbury quotes Alfred's Handbook as an authority or the life of Aldhelm, citing Alfred's high appreciation f Aldhelm's Saxon poems, and adding the beautiful radition how by his skill as a minstrel he would gather he people round him, and gradually turn his song to acred themes[1]. Florence of Worcester[2] also cites a work which he calls 'Dicta regis Ælfredi' as an authority on he West Saxon genealogy. Even if we reject the evidence f Malmesbury and Florence as being so much later than Alfred's time, it seems to me quite impossible to identify a theological commonplace book, such as Asser describes, with the translation of Augustine's Soliloquies, as Wülker was once inclined to do[3], partly on the ground that Asser pplies the term 'flosculi' to the Handbook, while the translation of the Soliloquies bears the title 'Blostman' or Blooms. But the latter work, however free in the way in which it deals with its original, is very much more than a book of extracts. Besides, according to Asser, the Encheiridion was the very first of Alfred's works, whereas all critics are agreed that the Soliloquies are among the last, probably the very last of his works.

§ 91. Besides the Encheiridion, the only one of the literary works which owed their origin to Alfred mentioned by Asser is the translation of the Dialogues of Gregory

The translation of Gregory's Dialogues,

[1] Gesta Pont., pp. 333, 336.
[2] i. 272.
[3] Article on the 'Blostman' in Paul and Braune's Beiträge, iv. 119 ff. (1877). For Wülker's later views, see Grundriss, pp. 390–392, 415–420. Later writers continue, however, to repeat Wülker's earlier views, e. g. Macfadyen, p. 330. Wülker sets aside the Florence of Worcester reference, a little arbitrarily, as it seems to me, Beitr. u. s. p. 128.

the Great[1]. The existence of the Chronicle, at any rate up to 887, is implied in Asser's use of it, but it is nowhere mentioned. The easiest explanation of Asser's silence as to Alfred's other works is that they did not then exist. The date at which Asser professes to be writing is, as we have seen, 894; and this in turn confirms the view derived from the chronology of Grimbald's life, as to the comparatively late date at which Alfred commenced his independent literary career.

attributed by Asser to Werferth.

According to Asser, the translation of the Dialogues was not made by Alfred himself, but by Bishop Werferth at his command[2]; and in the little preface which Alfred prefixes to the work he makes no claim of authorship, but merely says: 'I besought my trusty friends that out of God's[3] books of the lives and miracles of the saints they would write for me the instruction which follows, so that strengthened in my mind through memory and love, I may amid the troubles of this world, sometimes think on the things of heaven.' Whether the expression 'trusty friends' is merely an impersonal plural for Werferth, or whether others really co-operated, I cannot say; but we may take it that Werferth was mainly responsible, and that in this

[1] Now at length (1900), after many vicissitudes and delays, edited by Hans Hecht in vol. 5 of Grein-Wülker's Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Prosa.

[2] 'Werfrithus . . . imperio regis libros dialogorum Gregorii papae . . . de Latinitate primus in Saxonicam linguam, aliquando sensum ex sensu ponens [hwilum andgit of andgite, Pref. Past. Care] elucubratim et elegantissime interpretatus est,' 486 E–487 A [46]; cf. W. M. i. 131. When Professor Earle says (Essays, p. 197) that the authority for Werferth's authorship of this translation 'is late and of doubtful value,' he goes much further in rejecting Asser than I can go.

[3] So in both MSS. according to Hecht, and it certainly is so in Hatton. But I suspect that in the original MS. there was simply a capital G., standing for 'Gregories,' which the scribes wrongly expanded. However highly Alfred might think of Gregory's works he would hardly speak of them as *God's* books.

case the share of Alfred was confined to furnishing a preface; just as authors nowadays are glad to get some man of light and leading to commend their works to the public.

Assistance given to Alfred by his literary advisers.

The degree in which Alfred made use of the help of his learned advisers would vary no doubt with the difficulty of the work in hand, and the degree of the king's own progress. In the case of the Pastoral Care, Alfred himself has told us who his helpers were [1]; in other cases, as we shall see, interesting traditions have been preserved. But I imagine that in all cases a good deal of the drudgery would be done by others, Alfred supplying the final literary form. Similar instances of co-operation have not been unknown in Oxford in the nineteenth century.

Evidence of the Dialogues as to Alfred's religious thought.

§ 92. If any evidence were needed to show that Alfred, with all his true and earnest piety, was yet in his religious thought the child of his century, it would be found in the fact that he should have chosen the Dialogues of Gregory as the first of all books to be translated. The work was enormously popular in the Middle Ages [2]; but to our thought it is the least edifying of all Gregory's writings. In it the principle of St. James, that 'the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much,' is materialised, until the prayers of the saints become a mere sort of lucky bag or wishing cap for the obtaining of anything that is wanted, from the raising of the dead, or the punishment of an enemy, to the supply of the most ordinary articles of domestic economy, such as oil, and wine, or the mending of a broken sieve; while the fact that Gregory professes in many cases to have these stories from the

[1] Plegmund, Asser, Grimbald, and John.

[2] Bede, ii. 70; Ebert, u. s. i. 546 ff. The fourth book of the Dialogues had further a very great influence on the development of the mediaeval doctrine of Purgatory.

mouth of eyewitnesses[1], illustrates the truth of what Dr. Gore has said[2], that 'there are . . . ages when belief is so utterly uncritical, that it does seem as if they could not under any circumstances afford us satisfactory evidence of miraculous occurrences.'

Relics.

In this connexion may be mentioned the stress which Asser lays on Alfred's veneration for the relics of the saints[3]. In this too, if it is authentic, Alfred was the child of his age. The natural feeling of Christian reverence for the body which had once been a temple of the Holy Ghost, degenerated into an unhealthy passion for collecting dead men's bones, which reached its height in the ninth century[4]. And this passion led to a hungry relic-mongering, a system of pious thefts, and a wholesale manufacture of spurious relics, of which Rome was the head-quarters, which are among the least pleasant features of the mediaeval Church. We may be sure that there was nothing unworthy either in Alfred's reverence for the relics, or in his belief in the wonder-working powers of the saints. And for the rest, I think one realises more and more how a really religious spirit assimilates the good and is immune from the evil of the particular system in which it is placed by Providence. There is no one, for instance, who knows anything of the lives of the devout peasantry, say, of Scotland, or of Roman Catholic countries on the Continent, but must feel that the somewhat hard creed of the one, and the somewhat superstitious creed of the other are absolutely

[1] e. g. i. 2, 3, 7, 9, &c.

[2] Bampton Lectures, p. 74.

[3] 'reliquiis quibus ille rex maxime post Dominum confidebat,' 478 D [28]; the candles which Alfred invented, 'die noctuque . . . coram sanctis multorum electorum Dei reliquiis, quae semper eum ubique comitabantur, . . . lucescebant,' 496 D [68]; cf. the (probably spurious) passage 485 B [41].

[4] 'Die Verehrung der Reliquien und der Glaube an ihre Wunderkräfte war kaum zu irgend einer Zeit grösser,' Ebert, u. s. ii. 99, 334 ff., iii. 208 ff.; Gregorovius, iii. 72 ff.; Bede, ii. 157 f.

s nothing compared with the effectual power of religion which is the same in both.

To return, however, from this digression to Werferth's ranslation of the Dialogues. One very interesting fact bout this translation is that, for the greater part of the irst two books [1], it exists in two recensions, of which the ater is not an independent translation, but stands to he older text in the relation of a revised version [2]. It s, as a rule, much nearer to the original; it retrenches he redundancies [3], and corrects the mistakes [4] of the arlier version. Sometimes we can see that the reviser had different reading in the Latin text from that adopted in he unrevised translation [5]. Moreover the vocabulary is onsiderably modified, certain words being systematically ubstituted by the reviser for others of like meaning [6].

Double recension of the translation of the Dialogues.

[1] The MS. of the revised version, Hatton 76, is mutilated near the nd of ii. 35, and has also several acunae earlier in the work, Hecht, p. ix.

[2] See H. Johnson, Gab es zwei . . altenglische Uebersetzungen er Dialoge Gregors? Berlin, 1884.

[3] e.g. 4, 14; 5, 1; 9, 19; 15, 9; 30, 1. Occasionally, though rarely, he later version is the longer, g. 36, 20; 37, 27; 42, 28. The eferences are to the pages and ines of Hecht's edition, where the wo texts are very conveniently rinted in parallel columns.

[4] e.g. 17, 1 ff.; 31, 28 ff.; 41, 24 ff.; 3, 7 f.; 46, 14 ff.; 62, 9 ff.; 67, 1; 1, 30 ff.; 108, 2; 126, 19; 127, 0 ff.; 128, 2; 133, 12; 136, 7; 39, 16; 140, 3; 141, 21; 163, 10.

[5] 35, 17 æmtignesse C = otio, ngange H = ostio; 89, 30 mid þrum C = cum aliis, mid fiðerum H = cum alis; at 145, 17 C is more correct than H, unless this too rests on a difference of reading, molesta *for* modesta; the latter is certainly right. (C = unrevised, H = revised text.)

[6] I give a few examples of changes frequently made, with the number of instances which I have noticed: *ongitan* altered to *oncnawan* (14 times; in three cases *ongitan* is retained); *gangan* to *stæppan* (7); *tid* to *tima* (8; in four cases *tid* is retained); *cniht* to *cnapa* (19; in three cases *cniht* is retained); *wise* to *þing* (17); *semninga* to *færinga* (8); *hwæt*, as exclamation, inserted (9). There are probably other instances of these changes which I have overlooked. But these are sufficient to show that they were systematically made. And the list could be easily enlarged.

This last feature makes it likely that the reviser was a different person from the original translator. Who he was we shall probably never know. It is unlikely to have been Alfred himself. For the rest, both versions keep pretty close to the original without substantial additions or omissions.

The Anglo-Saxon martyrology.

§ 93. In the class of works which owe their inspiration to Alfred, though not actually written by him, we may possibly place the Anglo-Saxon martyrology alluded to above[1]. We may certainly place in this class the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle[2] in its original form, and may inscribe upon it the legend which encircles Alfred's Jewel, 'Alfred bade make me.' I have shown elsewhere that all the MSS of the Chronicle up to 892 are traceable to a common original. From that point they diverge. The explanation is that at that point copies were made[3] and sent to different religious houses, where they were continued to a large extent independently of one another. This view of Alfred's relation to the Chronicle is strongly confirmed by the genealogical preface in MS. A of the Chronicle, in which the West Saxon genealogy is carried down to the accession of Alfred and no further, showing clearly that it was drawn up for a chronicle compiled in his reign.

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.

Another fact which points the same way is the strong resemblance between the phraseology of the Chronicle and that of Alfred's translation of Orosius, of which I shall have more to say when I come to speak of that translation[4].

[1] See above, pp. 34, 35.

[2] For this account of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle I may refer generally to the Introduction to vol. ii of my edition, especially §§ 62, 68, 83, 89, 93, 100-8.

[3] For the body of scribes maintained by Alfred see the little verse Proem to the Pastoral Care (the book itself is represented as speaking) 'Ælfred kyning . . . mid his writerum sende suð 7 norð heht him swelcra ma brengan þære bisene,' pp. 8-9.

[4] Below, § 99.

Gaimar also, as is well known, has a most interesting passage in which he connects the composition of the Chronicle both with Alfred and with Winchester. Of course Gaimar is a very late authority. But his statement harmonises so well with the indications furnished by the Chronicle itself, and with the inherent probabilities of the case, that I am inclined to attach much weight to it. Moreover the moderation of Gaimar's statement is distinctly in its favour. He does not say that Alfred wrote the Chronicle, but merely that he caused it to be written.

Of the materials available for carrying out Alfred's design for a national Chronicle I have said enough elsewhere.

Works attributed to Alfred.

§ 94. It may be convenient to mention here one or two works which have been attributed to Alfred more or less doubtfully, in order to clear the way for the consideration of those works as to the authenticity of which there is practically no doubt.

Translation of the Psalter.

In William of Malmesbury's account of Alfred's literary works there occurs this very interesting statement: 'He began to translate the Psalter, but died when he had barely finished the first part of it[1].' By the first part is probably meant the first fifty psalms. The Psalter was frequently regarded in the Middle Ages as consisting of three divisions of fifty psalms each; so much so, that one of the regular names for the Psalter in Irish is 'the three fifties[2].' Now it is an interesting fact that in the Bibliothèque Nationale

The Paris MS.

[1] 'Psalterium transferre aggressus, uix prima parte explicata, uiuendi finem fecit,' G. R. i. 132. On Alfred's fondness for the psalms see above, pp. 16, 140; below, p. 153. It is worth notice that in Boeth. xxxix. § 10 (p. 133), Alfred substitutes a quotation from the psalms, for the Greek quotation of the original.

[2] See Bede, ii. 137; so in Anglo-Saxon we have 'let him sing one fifty,' 'two fifties,' &c., ibid. 138; and add to the references there given, Thorpe, Ancient Laws, ii. 286.

at Paris, there is an eleventh century MS. containing a Latin and an Anglo-Saxon version of the psalms in parallel columns[1]; each psalm, with one or two exceptions, being headed by a Latin rubric, and, in the case of the first fifty psalms, also by an explanation in Saxon of the circumstances which gave rise to the psalm, and of the applications of which it is susceptible. The MS. formerly belonged to Jehan, Duc de Berry (1340–1416), the brother of Charles V of France, who possibly acquired it during his nine years' sojourn as a hostage in England after the peace of Brétigny, 1360. Now it is a striking fact that in this Psalter the first fifty psalms are translated into prose, while the remainder are in alliterative verse. The question therefore arises, did the scribe of the MS. (or of its archetype) take the latter part of an existing alliterative version, in order to complete a fragmentary prose translation? or did he, on the other hand, take part of an existing prose translation to make good a copy of the poetical version which had been accidentally mutilated at the beginning? The former is, on every ground, more probable; especially as we have evidence of the existence of a complete alliterative version of the Psalter identical with that in the Paris MS.[2], whereas there is no such evidence available in the case of the fragmentary prose version. It was therefore an attractive suggestion of Professor Wülker's[3] that in this fragment we have the incomplete Alfredian version mentioned by William of Malmesbury. The question has been elaborately discussed on the affirmative side by Dr. Wichmann[4], on the negative side by Dr. J. Douglas Bruce[5]. I cannot say that the

Partly in prose, and partly in verse.

Arguments for and against

[1] The MS. was edited by Mr. Thorpe for the Clarendon Press in 1835.

[2] See Wichmann in Anglia, xi. 41.

[3] Grundriss, p. 436.

[4] Anglia, xi. 39 ff.

[5] Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, ix. 43 ff.; also printed separately.

rguments of either have carried any strong conviction to ny mind. Dr. Bruce's reasoning that the translation and eadings imply a knowledge of ecclesiastical modes of inter- retation impossible to a layman, overlooks the possibility hat Alfred might derive that knowledge from his clerical ssistants. On the other hand I cannot attach much veight to Dr. Wichmann's arguments from coincidences vith the Cura Pastoralis, or from the applicability of ertain interpretations to the circumstances of Alfred's life. When we consider that David and Alfred were both kings, hat both had enemies from whom they were both very narvellously delivered, we shall readily see that an inter- retation which would suit the one might very easily be pplicable to the other. The most striking instance of this as not, as far as I remember, been cited. It is in the ntroduction to Ps. xxiii (xxiv), where it is said that in this psalm David was prophesying how his ealdormen (principes) would be fain of his return from exile [1], words which recall the expression of the Chronicler how Alfred's people 'were fain of him' when he emerged from his retreat at Athelney.

Alfred's authorship of the prose portion.

On the whole then we must leave the question undecided, until further evidence or further argument is brought forward.

§ 95. I would however point out that even if the decision should be against Alfred's authorship, it is still possible that the prose portion of the Paris Psalter may be the work referred to by William of Malmesbury. The

Even if not by Alfred, this may be the

To these two essays and Mr. Thorpe's Preface I owe several of the facts made use of in this section.

[1] 'he witgode ðe him sylfum, hu his ealdormen sceoldon fægnian his cymes of his wræcsiðe,' Thorpe, p. 50; cf. Solil. p. 204, where it is said how a man returned from exile remembers his past troubles, in pleasurable contrast with his present good fortune.

work alluded to by Malmesbury.

colophon at the end of the MS. gives the name of the scribe in the Latin form Wulfwinus. In the Cottonian Collection there is a MS. of the Saxon Gospels with the colophon: 'Wulfwi me wrat.' This was certainly a Malmesbury book, as is shown by the insertion of a Malmesbury Charter between the Gospels of St. Luke and St. John. If this Wulfwi could be identified with the Wulfwinus of the Paris Psalter, or its archetype[1], it would make it likely that that also was a Malmesbury book. William of Malmesbury was librarian of his monastery[2], and there may have been a tradition there that the prose translation was the work of Alfred; a tradition which would be interesting even if it were not strictly true[3].

Statement that Alfred translated the whole Bible, probably due to a misun-

There is a statement in the twelfth-century Liber Eliensis that 'Alfred translated the whole Old and New Testaments for the blessing of the English nation[4].' I know no earlier evidence for this, and I believe the statement to have arisen from a misunderstanding of one of William of Malmesbury's rhetorical flourishes in which he

[1] These colophons were sometimes mechanically copied by scribes, and Thorpe suggested that such might be the case in the present instance. If this were so, then it would not be necessary to prove identity of handwriting in order to prove that the person referred to was the same.

[2] Gesta Regum, ed. Stubbs, I. xvi.

[3] It is not impossible that the whole tradition of Alfred having translated the Psalter may have arisen out of the passage in Asser where it is said that Alfred's Encheiridion or Commonplace Book grew, 'quousque propemodum ad magnitudinem unius psalterii peruenerit,' 492 B [57]. We seem to have a trace of this confusion in the Eulogium Historiarum, iii. 9: 'semper habebat librum in sinu quod ipse uocabat manuale, . . quidam dicunt hoc fuisse Psalterium.'

[4] 'totum Nouum et Vetus Testamentum in eulogiam Anglicae gentis transmutauit,' p. 81 (Anglia Christiana Society edition). Ailred of Rievaulx (also twelfth century) says 'sacros apices in linguam Anglicam uertere laborabat,' col. 722.

ays that Alfred 'gave to English ears the greater part of he Roman library[1] (bibliothecae)', meaning by the last hrase Latin authors. But Bibliotheca is a common name n the Middle Ages for St. Jerome's Latin translation of he Bible, the library of divine books[2]; hence Malmes- ury's statement was misunderstood as meaning that Alfred ad translated the greater part of the Latin Bible. derstanding.

The statement of Ingulf[3] that Alfred made a Domesday Book like William the Conqueror rests either on a confusion of Dómbóc (Book of Laws) with Domesday Book[4]; or possibly on a confusion of William's Rotulus Wintoniae, as Domesday was sometimes called[5], with Alfred's Winchester Book, i.e. the Chronicle. Alleged Domesday Book of Alfred.

Other works which popular tradition has ascribed to Alfred are a collection of proverbs, a translation of Æsop's fables, and a treatise on falconry[6]. Other works.

§ 96. Very different in value from the Dialogues, according to our notions, is the other work of Gregory, the translation of which is due to Alfred, the Pastoral Care. It is a beautiful book, full of wise and loving spiritual counsel, and of sayings both shrewd and tender. It is greatly to the credit of the mediaeval Church that it set such store by this little manual[7]. Alfred sent a copy of Alfred's translation of Gregory's Pastoral Care.

[1] 'plurimam partem Romanae bibliothecae Anglorum auribus dedit,' G. R. i. 132.

[2] Cf. the lines of Alcuin:—

'Nomine Pandecten proprio uocitare memento
Hoc corpus sacrum, Lector, in ore tuo;
Quod nunc a multis constat Bibliotheca dicta
Nomine non proprio, ut lingua Pelasga docet.'

Dümmler, Poetae Latini Aeui Carolini, i. 283.

[3] Fulman, Scriptores, i. 79, 80.

[4] So Schmid, Gesetze, p. xli.

[5] Ingulf, u. s.; Chron. Evesham, p. 97.

[6] See Pauli, König Ælfred, pp. 241 ff. The Saxon life of St. Neot speaks in very large terms of Alfred's literary works, but gives no names of any of them; for the Proverbs, cf. Ailred of Rievaulx, u. s.; Ann. Winton. p. 10.

[7] See the references collected, Bede, ii. 70; Ebert, u. s. i. 551, 552. In Ælfric's Canons it is

his translation to each of his bishops, to aid them in what Gregory himself[1] so beautifully calls 'the art of arts, the care of souls.' I agree with Professor Wülker[2] in thinking this the earliest of Alfred's translations, and largely for the reason that, as he points out, the Preface, as we have learnt to know it, is so obviously a preface, not merely to this work, but to the whole series of translations which Alfred contemplated, of 'the books which it is most needful for every man to know.' If what was said above is correct, the date of it cannot be earlier than 894, and it may be a little later. It has often been noticed that of all Alfred's works (not reckoning among these the Dialogues), this is the one in which he keeps closest to his original. I attribute this rather to his reverence for that original, than to any inability on his part to deal more freely with it, had he so desired. The omissions are few and unimportant[3]. The additions are much more numerous, but as a rule they are very slight. They are mostly of the kind which a modern editor would place on the margin or in a footnote. A very large class consists merely of the insertion of the names of the various books of the Bible from which Gregory's scriptural quotations are taken[4]. In the case of the psalms the number of the

Its relation to the original.

Omissions and additions.

mentioned among the books 'which a mass-priest needs must have,' Thorpe, Ancient Laws, ii. 350.

[1] Cura Past. i. 1; 'cræft eabra cræfta,' p. 45; Alfred uses exactly the same expression, Solil. p. 180.

[2] Grundriss, pp. 394 ff.

[3] 133, 18 (ii. 7) an etymology of Gregory's omitted; 135, 20 (ii. 7) an alternative interpretation omitted; 401, 28 (iii. 27) 'masculorum concubitores' omitted; 461, 13 (iii. 40). The references are to the pages and lines of Mr. Sweet's edition; references to the books and chapters of the original are given in brackets.

[4] 243, 11. 13; 253, 11; 275, 15; 277, 19; 299, 15. 17. 19. 21. 23; 301, 1. 3; 311, 25; 315, 24; 323, 4. 11. 25; 325, 5; 327, 1; 329, 22; 331, 6. 13; 343, 1; 367, 2; 369, 5; 371, 14; 373, 23; 377, 7. 25; 379, 3; 381, 12; 387, 25;

salm is often given[1], which is possibly an illustration of Asser's statements[2] as to the special fondness of Alfred for the Psalter. Other insertions consist of brief explanatory notes; an allusion or metaphor is cleared up[3], a foreign word or custom is explained[4], a quotation or story is completed[5]. Thus after a reference to the institution of the Levirate among the Jews, Alfred adds: 'this was good law under the old covenant, and to us now it is a parable[6].' The manna is 'the sweet food that came down from heaven[7].' Shittim wood, we are told, never rots[8]. It does not follow that the explanation is always correct. Thus to Christ's denunciation of the Pharisees for scrupulosity in tithing herbs is added the statement that they left untithed their more valuable possessions[9].

Interpretation by Saxon analogies.

§ 97. Occasionally Alfred interprets biblical things by Saxon analogies. Thus the Hebrew cities of refuge become a Saxon 'frithstow[10],' as they do also in Alfred's preface to his laws[11]. The Doctors among whom the child Jesus was found were the wisest 'Witan' that there were in

389, 9. 23; 395, 12; 405, 10; 409, 32; 413, 17. 21; 421, 10; 425, 30; 427, 28. 32; 433, 8. 18; 435, 9; 437, 19; 445, 19. 31. 35; 463, 20. 23; in two cases the references are wrong; at 91, 16 Mal. ii. 7 is assigned to Zechariah, though Malachi is given in the original; at 117, 7 1 Cor. iv. 21 is assigned to Galatians.

[1] 413, 10; 415, 5; 419, 6; 425, 20. 25; 429, 23; 435, 18; 465, 4. 14. 23.

[2] 474 B [16], 485 E [43], 491 C [55].

[3] 31, 21; 103, 5; 145, 20; 181, 12; 189, 7; 222, 22; 253, 12; 293, 2. 4; 301, 7; 401, 28; 421, 19.

[4] Cf. the marvellous etymology of 'sacerdos,' 139, 15.

[5] 37, 5 ff.; 43, 20; 101, 16 ff.; 117, 18.

[6] 43, 15.

[7] 125, 19.

[8] 169, 23.

[9] 439, 29; for other doubtful interpretations cf. 391, 23; 411, 10. At 391, 23 is an insertion which is unintelligible to me. Possibly it rests on some difference of reading in the Latin.

[10] 167, 2.

[11] Turk, u. s. pp. 37, 70; Schmid, p. 60; cf. also Boeth. xxxiv. § 8 (p. 89); Pss. ix. 9; xvii. 1; xxx. 3.

Jerusalem[1]. Uriah, whom David murdered, was 'his own loyal thane[2].' In the Soliloquies Alfred speaks of the Apostles as Christ's thanes[3]. This process is carried yet further in the sacred epic poetry both of the insular and continental Saxons, the disciples becoming Christ's 'comites' or 'gesiths,' who are bound to die with their Lord[4]. Alfred here also, as in some of his other works[5], and in the Laws[6], lays great stress on the position of the Lord[7]. Once or twice Alfred tones down his original; thus where Gregory speaking of the death of impenitent sinners says: 'they lament that they refused to serve God now that they can in no wise by service make good the evils of their former negligence,' Alfred in his pity inserts the clause: 'unless they be helped by repentance and God's mercy[8].' In one instance the explanation given is dogmatic, the reception of 'the spirit of adoption' of which St. Paul speaks, being referred to baptism[9]. No doubt for many, if not most, of these additions Alfred was indebted to his clerical assistants. Often, without any very distinct addition being made to the text, it is rather freely expanded[10]. Sometimes the rendering is rather loose[11], as if the mean-

The original toned down,

expanded, and mis-translated.

[1] 385, 22.

[2] 35, 23; cf. 63, 3; 373, 18 (*king's* highways). For thane cf. Bede, pp. 122, 126, 134, 194.

[3] p. 197.

[4] So in the continental Heliand, cf. Ebert, u. s. iii. 102, 103; in Andreas, ibid. 64; in Cynewulf's Christ, the Angels are the thanes, ibid. 51.

[5] Orosius, pp. 218, 296; Solil. p. 196.

[6] See above, p. 123.

[7] 109, 13; 143, 1 ff.; 197, 9.

[8] 251, 18; cf. a similar but less striking instance, 421, 35.

[9] 263, 21.

[10] 129, 14 ff.; 157, 15 ff.; 215, 21 ff.; 271, 4. 5; 279, 13. 16; 283, 13 ff.; 291, 14 ff.; 306, 5 ff.; 343, 8 ff.; 375, 14 ff.; 387, 2 ff. 25 ff.; 397, 22 ff.; 433, 1 ff.; 437, 12 ff.; 445, 10 ff. (this expansion of the metaphor of a boat making its way against the stream is of great interest); 449, 2 f.; 451, 28 ff. 465, 16 ff.

[11] 145, 20 ff.; 149, 24 ff.; 165, 13 ff.; 179, 10 ff.; 185, 24 ff.; 207, 18 ff.; 313, 1 ff.; 325, 8 ff.; 449, 5 ff.; 457, 3 ff.

ng of the original had been imperfectly grasped; some-imes it is distinctly wrong[1]. And throughout one may ay that the translation is made (to use Alfred's own xpression) rather 'sense by sense' than 'word by word[2].' And sometimes, though the phrase may be very close to the original, it seems to bear the stamp of Alfred's own experience. The heading of the fourth chapter must have come straight from his heart: 'that many times the business of government and rule distracts the mind of the ruler[3].' 'What,' he exclaims in another place, 'is rule and authority but the soul's tempest which is always buffeting the ship of the heart with the storms of many thoughts, so that it is driven hither and thither in very narrow straits, wellnigh wrecked among many mighty rocks[4]?' Or again: 'the patient must be admonished to strengthen their heart after their great victory, and hold the burg of their mind against marauding bands, and fortify it with battlements[5].' Lastly: 'every host (*here*) is the less effective when it comes, if its coming is known beforehand. For it finds them prepared whom it thought to take unprepared[6].' In these two last passages we seem almost to hear the echo of Alfred's experience in 878[7].

The phraseology bears the stamp of Alfred's own experience.

§ 98. The next two works of Alfred to be considered

Question

[1] 75, 14 f.; 103, 25; 149, 4 ff.; 365, 3 ff.; 407, 23 ff.; 427, 17; 443, 10. This last instance is of some little interest; Alfred translates 'quem Deus suscitauit solutis *doloribus* inferni' by 'whom God raised up to loose the *prisoners* of hell.'

[2] Preface to Pastoral Care.

[3] 37, 11. 12; cf. 7, 17. 18; 103, 1.

[4] 59, 3 ff.

[5] 229, 3 ff. The very word 'stælherigas' occurs in the Chronicle, 897.

[6] 433, 27 ff.; cf. also Oros. 46, 34.

[7] Since writing the above account, I have read two careful German dissertations on the relation of Alfred's translation of the Cura Pastoralis to the original, one by Gustav Wack, Greifswald, 1889; the other by Albert de Witz, Bunzlau, 1889. They go into greater detail than I have done, but come to much the same result.

as to the order of the Orosius and Bede translations.

are both historical, viz. the translations of Orosius' Universal History, and of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation. There has been however considerable difference of opinion as to the order of these two works. The earlier critics, however much they might differ among themselves as to the succession of Alfred's works taken as a whole, all, with the exception of Dr. Bosworth, agreed in placing the Orosius before the Bede [1]. But in recent times Wülker [2], August Schmidt [3], and my friend Professor Schipper of Vienna [4] have argued in favour of the other view. The chief ground on which they have based their conclusion is the greater freedom of the Orosius both in translation and arrangement as compared with the Bede. In the latter the translation is sometimes quite unduly literal, so as to be almost unintelligible in places without a reference to the original [5]; while as to arrangement, the modifications of the original are, for the most part, limited to omissions of matters like the Easter Controversy which had ceased to have any living interest, the additions and transpositions being very unimportant. The Orosius on the other hand is not only freer in translation, but is so recast by transposition, addition, and omission, as to be practically a new work.

It is argued that this greater freedom implies a more practised hand, and therefore a later date. The argument

[1] See the table in Wülker, Grundriss, p. 393. Wack, u. s. p. 58, would put the Orosius even before the Cura Pastoralis.

[2] Wülker, u. s. p. 396.

[3] In his useful dissertation: Untersuchungen über K. Ælfred's Beda-übersetzung, 1889.

[4] Gegenwärtiger Stand der Forschung über K. Ælfred's Beda-übersetzung, 1898 (Sitzungsber. of the Vienna Academy of Sciences).

[5] Cf. Ælfric's saying: 'every one who translates from Latin into English should strive that the English may have its own idiom, otherwise it is very misleading to any one who does not know the Latin idiom,' Preface to Heptateuch.

eems to me fallacious. As regards substantial alterations
ve must bear in mind the different character of the two
riginals. Bede's Ecclesiastical History has always been an
lmost sacred book to Englishmen. It needed no recasting,
eyond a few omissions, to make it suitable for English
eaders in Alfred's day. But Orosius' work, written with the
olemical object of enforcing the argument of Augustine's De
iuitate Dei against the pagan contention that the troubles
f the times were due to the introduction of Christianity,
y showing, in a survey of universal history, that the evils
f pre-Christian days were far greater, and full therefore
f ecclesiastical gloating over the crimes and calamities of
agan history, required much more drastic treatment. On
he occasional over-literalness of the Bede translation I shall
ave something to say presently. As regards the greater
reedom of the Orosius, any one who has examined in one
f our Pass Schools will bear witness that there is a kind of
ree translation, which is very far from implying a per-
ect mastery of the original. And I must confess that
Alfred's freedom in the Orosius is often of the latter kind[1].
I should say that there are far more serious blunders in
ranslation in the Orosius than in the Bede; though on
he other hand it must be remembered that Bede's Latin
s a good deal easier than that of Orosius.

Character of the two originals,

and of the translations.

§ 99. In the Introduction to the second volume of my Saxon Chronicle[2] I argued in favour of the priority of the Orosius, on the ground of the affinity in diction and expression between it and the Saxon Chronicle. That argument I need not repeat here; I still think that it has force, though I possibly laid too much stress upon it, as

Arguments in favour of the priority of the Orosius.

[1] See below, and cf. Schilling: 'there are many mistakes in translation due to carelessness and want of grammatical knowledge,' p. 9; 'his knowledge of Latin was still small when he translated the Orosius,' p. 61.

[2] pp. cvi–cviii.

one is apt to do when one gets hold of an idea which on fancies to be new[1]. It is however capable of bein reinforced. The second chapter of Bede's first book con tains an account of Caesar's invasions of Britain. This i a matter which one would take to be of great interest t all inhabitants of this island[2]. Yet in the Bede transla tion it is, in the older recension, omitted altogether, an even in the later recension is passed over with the bare mention[3]. But this chapter is almost wholly taken fro Orosius; and when we turn to the Orosius version, w find that Alfred has not only translated the passage i question, but has enriched it with his own local knowledg telling us that Caesar's first two engagements with th natives were 'in the land which is called Kent-land,' an that the third took place 'near the ford which is calle Wallingford[4].' If the Orosius translation preceded th Bede, we can understand why Alfred omitted the corr sponding passage in the latter. Again, in chapter v o the same book, Bede expressly corrects a mistake o Orosius' as to the wall of Severus, saying that it wa not properly a wall, but a rampart of sods with a ditch Alfred not only adopts this correction here[5], but i another place of the Bede seems to emphasise it[6], whe

[1] I did not then know that Mr. Sweet had already noticed this affinity, though he gave no examples, and drew no inference from it, Preface to Pastoral Care, p. xl.

[2] It is true that in the Orosius Alfred omits the conquest of Britain by Claudius (vii. 6), but this may be, as Schilling suggests (p. 21), from quasipatriotic motives, because of the ease with which the island was conquered. He does however give it in the Bede (H. E. i. 3), and this fa might be used as an argument favour of the priority of the Be translation.

[3] Ed. Schipper, p. 13; the co responding capitulum is howev translated in both recensions.

[4] Orosius, ed. Sweet, p. 238.

[5] 'mid dice 7 mid eorðweall 'with ditch and earth-wall,' Miller, p. 32.

[6] 'het dician 7 eorðwall gewy can'=*uallum fecerat*, ibid. p. 4 cf. (of a different matter) ib

here is no special emphasis in the original. In the Orosius passage the mistake is uncorrected [1]. Alfred shows in many ways that he had a good memory, and that he did not shrink from correcting his authors where he thought they needed it; he would hardly have ignored Bede's correction had he been cognisant of it when he was making the translation of Orosius. The only serious argument on the other side is one which has not, as far as I am aware, been previously noticed. I mean the affinity of passages in the Orosius with passages in the Boethius, which is, as we shall see [2], almost certainly later than either the Orosius or the Bede. Of these the most important are two in which Alfred without any hint from the original protests against the doctrine that all things happen by fate [3], a subject which occupies a prominent place in the Boethius. There would, however, be nothing impossible in the supposition that Alfred may have read the Consolation of Boethius before he undertook the work of translating it, or the subject may have been suggested to his active mind in some other way. On the whole the question of precedence as between the Orosius and the Bede must be left uncertain; though in accordance with my own view I shall take the Orosius first.

Argument on the other side.

§ 100. It would be impossible to discuss in detail the modifications made by Alfred in his original. They occur

Relation of the Orosius

p. 366: 'mid dice 7 mid eorð-wealle utan ymbsealde' = circumvallante aggere.

[1] p. 270.

[2] Below, § 109.

[3] pp. 60, 22 ff.; 62, 9 ff.; cf. also Oros. 42, 14 with Boet. 1, 9. 10; Or. 56, 32 with Bo. 9, 29; 21, 1 &c.; Or. 220, 16 with Bo. 34, 29; Or. 296, 8 with Bo. 7, 2. 3. In Oros. 72, 8 ff., Alfred seems to connect the word Fabianus with faber (craftsman), as in Boethius he seems to connect the name Fabricius with the same root, pp. 46, 165; one or two other points of connexion between the Orosius and the Boethius are given below (pp. 177 *n*, 184 *n*); cf. also B. xv, xvi § 1 (p. 34) with O. pp. 88, 220, 226 (Aetna); B. xvi § 1, 4, xxix § 2 (pp. 34, 39, 66) with O. pp. 260, 262 (Nero).

translation to the original.

on almost every page. I can only indicate their general character, and give a few specimens of some of the more important. And in doing this I very willingly acknowledge the help which I have derived from Dr. Hugo Schilling's useful dissertation on the subject[1].

It may give some measure of the extent of Alfred's changes to note that whereas the original consists of seven books divided into 236 chapters, the Saxon version contains six books with only 84 chapters[2]. The most important

Additions.

additions are to be found in the geographical introduction which Orosius prefixes to his work. It is here that Alfred inserts the well-known description of the geography of Germany, which for him includes all central Europe from the Rhine on the west to the Don on the east, and from the Danube on the south to the White Sea on the north[3]. Here too are inserted the yet more famous accounts of the

Voyages of Ohthere and Wulfstan.

voyages of Ohthere[4] and Wulfstan[5], on which so much has been written. Ohthere's account begins: 'Ohthere told his lord king Alfred that of all the Northmen he dwelt furthest to the North'; and this is the only direct evidence which the work contains as to its authorship. These accounts and also the description of Germany, which, like them, must have been carefully derived from oral information, illustrate what Asser tells of Alfred's intercourse with strangers and his eagerness to learn from them[6], a trait which was characteristic also of the great Charles[7]. In the historical part the chief additions are the description of a Roman triumph[8], and of the temple

[1] K. Ælfred's angelsächsische Bearbeitung der Weltgeschichte des Orosius (1886).

[2] Dr. Schilling gives the numbers rather differently, p. 6; I have taken for the original the capitula as given by Zangemeister from the St. Gallen MS.; for the translation, the capitula in Mr. Sweet's edition.

[3] pp. 14 ff. [4] pp. 17–19.

[5] pp. 19–21. [6] 486 B [44].

[7] Einhard, Vita Caroli, c. 21.

[8] 70, 22 ff.

of Janus[1]. But there are endless smaller additions; and of these one of the most interesting is the anecdote, ultimately derived from Suetonius, how Titus used to say that the day was a lost day on which he had done no good to any one[2]. This saying is quoted also in the Chronicle, and is one of the links connecting the two works[3]. We can understand how this saying of the 'deliciae generis humani' would come home to the heart of England's darling[4]. Some of these shorter insertions are brief explanatory notes[5] like those which we have already met with in the Cura Pastoralis, and, like them, are by no means always correct.

Editorial explanations.

§ 101. Sometimes the explanations are longer; and many of these are due entirely to Alfred's imagination, and are intended to make clear to us how, in his view, the event narrated came about. It is not in accordance with our modern notions that editorial explanations of this kind should be incorporated in the text of an author. But the idea of literary property is a comparatively modern one, and footnotes and appendices had not then been invented. It is more questionable when the phrase 'cwæð Orosius' which Alfred frequently[6] uses to indicate that a sentiment or a statement is his author's, not his own, is used, as is

[1] 106, 11 ff.

[2] 264, 2. 3.

[3] See Chron. II. cvi, 8. Joinville compares St. Louis to Titus, 'dont les anciennes escriptures racontent, que trop se dolut, et fut desconforté d'un jour que il n'avoit donné nul benefice,' c. 142.

[4] 'Alfred . . . Englene darling,' from the so-called Proverbs of Alfred printed in Kemble's Salomon and Saturn, pp. 226 ff.; so Layamon, i. 269: 'Alfred þe king, Englelondes deorling.' It is noteworthy that W. M. applies the term 'deliciae Anglorum' to Edgar, G. R. i. 164.

[5] One of the most interesting of these is the explanation of the 'indomitae gentes' against whom Severus built his wall, as 'Picts and Scots,' 270, 12. For other interesting glosses, cf. 108, 16; 110, 34; 196, 24; 206, 35.

[6] I have counted thirty-six instances.

the case in one or two instances, to introduce something for which there is no warrant in the original; for instance, one of the passages about fate alluded to above[1].

These frequently relate to military matters.

Of these editorial explanations the most interesting perhaps are those which relate to military matters; because they seem in some cases to reflect Alfred's own military experience — a point which Schilling has not noticed. For instance, when Alfred gives as Hannibal's reason for his terrible winter march over the Apennines that 'he knew that Flaminius the consul was fancying that he might remain securely in his winter quarters, . . being fully persuaded that no one would attempt such a march by reason of the intense cold[2],' we think of the sudden swoop of the Danes on Alfred at Chippenham that Epiphany tide 878[3]; the stratagem of a simulated flight by which he explains the defeat of Regulus[4], is one which there is reason to believe that the Danes more than once resorted to[5]; as also the device which he attributes to Hannibal, without any warrant from the original text, of sending out parties to ravage in various directions in order to make the enemy imagine that his whole force was occupied in this manner[6]; though this also closely resembles the feigned attacks which Alfred himself made from Athelney, in order to mask his advance in force to Ethandun[7].

Passages in Orosius illustrated by

§ 102. The same is true of some things for which there is a basis in Orosius himself; for instance, the story how within sixty days from the felling of the trees, Duilius had

[1] 62, 9 ff.; cf. 92, 27 ff.

[2] 188, 3 ff.

[3] Above, p. 59.

[4] 174, 30 ff.; cf. 76, 4 ff. of Tomyris and Cyrus. Here the stratagem in question is mentioned by Orosius, but Alfred expands the hint very luxuriantly.

[5] Above, p. 99.

[6] 188, 8.

[7] Above, pp. 59, 102, 105 6.

fleet of 130 ships ready 'both with mast and sail[1]' Alfred's own experience.
ecalls Alfred's own shipbuilding efforts; the story how
Dercyllidas dealt with the opposing forces of Pharnabazus
nd Tissaphernes is extraordinarily like Alfred's attempt
o detach the Danes of Milton from those at Appledore in
93 [894][2]: 'As soon as the Lacedemonian general knew
hat he had to deal with two hosts (*heras*), he thought it
nore advisable to make peace with the one, in order that
ie might the more easily overcome the other[3]'; while
have already suggested that the twofold division of the
Amazonian host[4], one to remain at home while the other
vas on active service, may have even suggested Alfred's
imilar division of the native fyrd *or* militia. And, indeed,
f the workings of the human mind were always traceable,
fancy we should find, more often than is commonly
upposed, that what seem like brilliant intuitions on the
art of great commanders and statesmen, had really been
uggested by their reading. Nor is this any detraction
rom their originality. To remember at the right time,
nd apply in the right way, the hints furnished by previous
xperience, is as much a mark of genius as invention.
There is an interesting tradition that Nelson's manœuvre Anecdote of Nelson.
f anchoring his vessels by the stern at the bombardment
f Copenhagen in 1801, was suggested by the fact that he
ad that morning been reading the twenty-seventh chapter
f the Acts, which tells how St. Paul's shipwrecked com-
anions 'cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for
he day[5].'

§ 103. Often the additions and expansions let us see

[1] 172, 1 ff.; cf. also the account of Anthony's ships, 246, 7 ff.

[2] Above, p. 113.

[3] 96, 12 ff.; cf. also 98, 12; 146, 17; 88, 3 ff.; 176, 14.

[4] 46, 15 ff.; see above, p. 110.

[5] Cited by Conybeare and Howson, Life of St. Paul, ii. 414 (ed. 1862) from private sources.

The alterations sometimes illustrate Alfred's own sentiments.

Alfred's own sentiments; his religious feelings[1], his admiration for genius, patriotism, and courage, as exemplified in such men as Alexander[2], Scaevola[3], Regulus[4], the two Scipios[5] and Caesar[6]; his disgust at ingratitude to God[7] and man[8], at cruelty[9], treachery[10], or sloth[11]. The omissions are often dictated by similar motives. He leaves out or abridges many of the civil wars, the calamities, the crimes, the unclean mythologies[12], over which Orosius gloated as proofs of heathen depravity; though often the omissions have no special motive beyond the necessity for shortening the work. It must be confessed that these omissions frequently have the effect of wholly dislocating the succession of events. And it may be said generally that Alfred, though he apprehends individual incidents with extraordinary vividness, is by no means clear as to the connexion of events. For the latter quality greater knowledge was required than was accessible in his day. In regard to the additions, moreover, we must bear in mind the possibility that some of them may be due, not to Alfred himself, but to interpolations or glosses in the MSS. which he used. This, as we shall see[13], is a consideration of great importance in the case of the Boethius, but it has been proved to apply to one or two passages of the Orosius also[14]. That there are many errors as to persons bearing the same or similar names[15], many con-

Mistakes.

[1] 74, 22 ff.; 210, 5 ff.; 248, 12 ff.; 290, 11 ff.

[2] 134, 10 ff.

[3] 68, 19 ff.

[4] 178, 9 ff. For Regulus, cf. also Boethius, xvi. § 2 (p. 37).

[5] 190, 17 ff.; 224, 24 ff.

[6] 242, 19. 20. 30 ff.

[7] 34, 34 ff. [8] 224, 24 ff.

[9] 54, 16 ff. (Phalaris); cf. Boeth. xvi. § 2 (p. 37, Busiris).

[10] 296, 1 ff.; the ironical remark on the loyalty (hlafordhyldo) shown by Rufinus and Stilicho to their master's children.

[11] 136, 27 ff.

[12] Another change from similar motives is 52, 35 ff.

[13] Below, § 110.

[14] 32, 13 ff.; 58, 7 ff.; see Schilling, p. 56.

[15] The two Scipios, 224, 24 ff.;

fusions of personal and geographical appellations[1], many quaint mistakes of translation[2] and of fact, as when he says that Augustus took his name from the eighth month of the year instead of vice versa[3], turns the snake-charming tribe of Psylli[4] into a kind of serpent, and infers from Augustus' heart-broken exclamation, 'Vare, redde legiones,' that that ill-fated commander had escaped alive from his defeat[5]; this is only what we might expect, and it would be ungracious to dwell upon such things[6]. Dr. Schilling has truly and excellently said[7] of the Orosius: 'We see Alfred here weak in historical and linguistic knowledge; but we see him also simple, high-hearted, and earnest; full of warm appreciation for all that is good, and of scorn for all that is evil; putting himself to school that he may educate and raise his people.'

Alfred's character displayed.

Sextus Julius Caesar and the Praetor Cneius Pompeius, are confused with the two great rivals of later days, and the whole account of the treatment of the former pair by the Senate is extraordinarily funny, 234, 21 ff.

[1] The most remarkable instance of this is in the account of Alexander's successors and the territories which fell to their lot, 142, 26 ff. (Oros. iii. 23, 7 ff.).

[2] e. g. 190, 29; 218, 10; 264, 4 (this last may be due to a wrong reading in the Latin text); 271, 17.

[3] 246, 16 ff.

[4] ibid. 32 ff.

[5] 250, 10 ff.

[6] Dr. Schilling has remarked (p. 59) that Alfred in the Orosius never mastered the fact that a Roman might have not merely two but three names. So when there are two consuls with three names each, he either makes three persons out of them with two names each, e. g. 176, 32; 182, 5 &c., or he omits the two last names altogether, e. g. 202, 18; 204, 23 &c. By the time he reached the Boethius he had overcome this difficulty. In two places he says that Marcus was called by another name Tullius, and by a third name Cicero, xviii. § 2, xli. § 3 (pp. 43, 143).

[7] p. 61.

LECTURE VI

LITERARY WORKS (*continued*); SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Authorship of the Orosius translation undisputed.

§ 104. We have seen[1] that in the case of the Orosius, the only direct hint of authorship contained in the book itself is the address of Ohthere to 'his lord King Alfred'; and the earliest external testimony on the subject is to be found in William of Malmesbury in the early part of the twelfth century. But no one has ever doubted King Alfred's authorship. Till recently the same might have been said of the Bede; in 1877 Professor Wülker spoke of Alfred's authorship of the Bede as 'a fact which no one hitherto has doubted or could doubt[2].' Since then, however, Mr. Sweet, in his Anglo-Saxon Reader[3], and Dr. Thomas Miller in his edition of the Bede translation, published by the Early English Text Society[4], have tried to overthrow the traditional view; the former, mainly on the ground of that occasional over-literalness of the version already alluded to[5]; the latter, because he thinks that it shows Mercian characteristics incompatible with a West Saxon origin. Now we must admit at once that the book itself contains no direct evidence of authorship, not even such

Recent doubts as to the Bede translation.

[1] Above, p. 160.

[2] Paul und Braune's Beiträge, iv. 127.

[3] Ed. 2, p. 196.

[4] Introduction (1890); Dr. Miller further enforced his view in a monograph on the Place Names in the English Bede, Quellen und Forschungen (1896). For a copy of this I was indebted to the writer.

[5] Above, § 98.

a hint as is dropped in the Orosius. On the other hand the external evidence is very much earlier. Ælfric, the homilist, distinctly quotes the book as Alfred's. In his homily on St. Gregory he says: 'Many books tell of his conversation and holy life, as does Historia Anglorum, which King Alfred translated out of English into Latin. . . . We will however tell you something about him because the fore-said book is not known to all of you, although it is translated into English[1].' This was written within a hundred years of Alfred's death. For many books of which the authorship has never been doubted we cannot produce evidence anything like as early. I may note in passing that in speaking of the translation of Gregory's Dialogues Ælfric makes no assertion as to the Alfredian authorship, merely saying 'the book has been translated into English, and in it any one who will read it may learn profitably of these matters[2].' In another place he gives interesting evidence that, till he himself took pen in hand, Alfred's translations were the only books accessible to those who did not know Latin[3].

Ælfric distinctly attributes it to Alfred, which he does not do in the case of the Dialogues.

Moreover the Cambridge University MS. of the Anglo-Saxon Bede, which is said to be of the middle of the eleventh century, has at the beginning and end the following distich:—

Evidence of MSS.

'Historicus quondam fecit me Beda Latinum,
Alfred, rex Saxo, transtulit ille pius.'

The same MS. contains, between Bede's Preface and the History proper, a copy of the West Saxon genealogy in the exact form in which it appears in MS. A of the Saxon Chronicle; i.e. it comes down to the accession of Alfred, and no further. This again connects the work with

[1] Homilies, ed. Thorpe, ii. 116-118.
[2] ibid. 358. [3] ibid. i. 2.

Alfred. The Cambridge MS. is, as far as we can test it, an undoubted copy of one which exists in the library of my own college. This is unfortunately imperfect, both at the beginning and the end. But if, as is likely, it also contained originally the distich and the pedigree, the evidence is thrown yet further back[1].

Curiously enough both Laȝamon[2] and Rudborne[3] speak of the Saxon version as if it were Bede's own.

The negative arguments inconclusive.

§ 105. The question of its authorship must not be regarded as outside the pale of discussion. Only I do not think that the arguments hitherto advanced are sufficient to establish a negative conclusion. As to Dr. Miller's Mercian theory, I may say at once that I have no pretensions to pose as an expert in early English dialects. I can get up no enthusiasm for the minute distinctions of form and spelling which form their criteria. They have for me only the practical and unpleasant interest that they oblige me often to look up a word in three or four different places in the dictionary before finding it. I may however mention that Professor Schipper, the latest editor of the Anglo-Saxon Bede[4], does not regard the Mercian theory

The argument from dialect.

[1] Prof. Schipper, Gegenwärtiger Stand, &c., p. 6.

[2] 'He nom þa Englisce boc,
þa makede Seint Beda.'
Laȝamon, i. 2.

[3] 'liber quem composuit in lingua Saxonica de Gestis Anglorum . . . cuius copiam habui in Prioratu Canonicorum de Suthwyk,' Anglia Sacra, i. 183. This is interesting as showing that Saxon studies were not quite extinct even in the fifteenth century. It is also interesting, because we can almost certainly point to the very 'copia' used by Rudborne. It is the Cotton MS. Otho B. XI. This is now terribly injured, owing to the great Cottonian fire of 1731. But Wanley (p. 219), who saw it when complete, describes it as 'exemplum antiquum primitus Eccles. Beatae Mariae de Suwika' (Southwick, Hants); cited, ed. Miller, I. xvi. Rudborne also cites Alfred's will, p. 206, though this does not agree with our copies.

[4] In vol. iv of Grein-Wülker's Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Prosa, 1897–1899.

is established[1]. But even if it were established, it does not seem to me incompatible with Alfred's authorship. It is agreed that all our existing MSS. go back to a single archetype, though they branch off into two groups which form to some extent a twofold recension[2]. The scribe of that archetypal MS. may have been a Mercian, and there may have been other MSS. in which these Mercian peculiarities were wanting. Even if it be assumed (for it certainly could not be proved), that this Mercian archetype was the original MS. of all, it is equally open to us to suppose that the scribe to whom Alfred dictated his translation in the first instance may have been a Mercian. Or again it is quite possible that the Mercian characteristics, if they exist, may be due to the influence of the Mercian scholars who assisted Alfred in his work—Plegmund, Werferth, and the two Mercian chaplains mentioned by Asser[3]. And it is some confirmation of this that there is a certain affinity noticeable between the diction and style of the Bede translation and that of the earlier or unrevised version of the Dialogues, which, as we have seen, there is good reason to attribute to Werferth[4].

[1] Gegenwärtiger Stand, &c.; u. s. pp. 4, 5.

[2] Ed. Miller, p. xxiii; ed. Schipper, p. xxix.

[3] Above, § 88.

[4] I have shown above, p. 145, that there are certain words characteristic of the earlier recension of the Dialogues which the reviser systematically alters into others, *semninga* into *færinga*, *tid* into *tima*, *ongitan* to *oncnawan*, &c. In the Bede I have noticed 32 instances of *semninga*, not one of *færinga*; 90 of *tid*, none of *tima*; 10 of *ongitan*, 2 of *oncnawan*. I do not pretend that my observations are exhaustive. The following words occur, so far as I know, only in the Bede and in the Dialogues (the references are to the pages and lines of Hecht's and Miller's editions respectively):—ágendlíce = proprie, D 264, 26; B 30, 10 (in the sense of 'arbitrarily' it occurs C. P. p. 144); allíc = catholicus, D 237, 20; B 312, 31; ancerlíf, D 210, 26; B 364, 30; bríesian, D 343, 37; B 244, 22; camphád, D 298, 8; B 480, 11; drihtenlíc, D 309, 26; B 158, 10; eardunghús,

Argument from style.

§ 106. As to the over-literalness of the translation in places, the fact must be admitted, though the extent of it has been, I think, somewhat exaggerated. The cases fall under three heads: (1) where a Latin construction is unidiomatically imitated in the Saxon[1]; this applies especially to constructions with the ablative absolute[2], the accusative and infinitive[3], and the use of the passive voice[4], the range of which is much more restricted in Saxon than in Latin[5]; (2) where a Latin word is translated by a Saxon one which may correspond fairly well with the general meaning of the Latin word, but does not give its sense in the particular passage[6]; (3) where a phrase or sentence is translated, to

D 185, 16; B 366, 16; efenceasterwaran, D 205, 1; B 62, 20; fordémedness, D 235, 14; B 34, 5; forsettan (in sense of 'obstruct') D 258, 28; B 212, 16; fremsumlíce, D 242, 10; B 184, 23; gefeolan, D 336, 23; B 450, 28; gefremedness, D 318, 15; B 32, 7; gewinfullíc, D 222, 9; B 56, 9; gýmeléasness, D 208, 4; B 242, 28; ungebrosnendlíc, D 233, 15; B 378, 4; ungeæhtendlíc, D 282, 21; B 84, 12. This list too might be easily extended; and the whole subject of the relation of the two works is well worthy of further examination. No doubt the resemblance is partly due to the similarity of their subject matter. The likeness of the two originals is also very strong in parts; so much so indeed that I think that Bede must, consciously or unconsciously, have modelled his style in the Hist. Eccl. on the Dialogues of Gregory. Still the likeness between the two translations is, I think, greater than one would expect in the case of two perfectly independent translators, and points to their having been produced under similar influences.

[1] e.g. 114, 29; 180, 15; 216, 9; the references are to the E. E. T. S. edition by Dr. Miller.

[2] e.g. 38, 24; 50, 1; 226, 30; 274, 10.

[3] e.g. 36, 17; 122, 33; 190, 22. 30; 266, 32; 294, 23; 406, 21.

[4] e.g. 32, 7; 172, 28; 270, 33.

[5] Instead of the passive the impersonal active form is ordinarily used in Anglo-Saxon; not 'the land is called Kent,' but, 'one calls the land Kent.' In the Celtic languages the so-called passive really is, in origin, an impersonal active form, which explains the (at first sight) strange phenomenon that the 'passive' always takes an accusative after it, see Zimmer, Keltische Studien, No. 8.

[6] e.g. 14, 27: 'fram deaðes líðe,' 'a mortis articulo' (líð =

ıse Alfred's own expression, 'word by word,' instead of sense by sense[1].' To all these classes the explanation uggested by Professor Schipper would often apply, viz. hat the translator may have embodied in his work inter-inear glosses which had been made to assist him; and he ites in illustration the difference between the West Saxon ınd Northumbrian versions of the Gospels, the former of vhich is a genuine translation, while the latter is an inter-inear gloss made word for word[2]. Some however of the ases where Latin constructions are reproduced, and also ne or two of the second class, give me the impression, ıot that the translator could not have translated more diomatically if he had pleased, but rather that he was rying experiments with the language. The development of early prose in almost all European languages has been largely influenced by Latin models, and it was only experi-ence which could show how far the process of assimilation might be carried. Similarly for some two centuries after the Renaissance English prose literature is full of experimentally transplanted Latinisms, of which a large proportion failed to make good their footing in the language. Another possibility must also be borne in mind; that the Bede may never have received Alfred's final revision. We have seen that in the case of the Dialogues an extensive revision was found desirable at a later time, and we seem to

Influence of Latin on early prose.

The Bede may never have been finally revised.

joint); 32, 8; 128, 14; 214, 17; 269, 9; 274, 11; 278, 2; 294, 7; 308, 22; 336, 24; 370, 4; 462, 7; 478, 33. An interesting instance of taking a metaphorical expression literally occurs 372, 14 (H. E. iv. 29). The original is 'incubuit precibus antistes'; this is translated 'ða aðenede se biscop hine in cruce 7 hine gebæd,' 'the bishop stretched himself in a cross and prayed'; i. e. the translator understands by 'incubuit' what the Irish call 'crosfigil,' or praying with the body stretched out prostrate on the ground in the form of a cross.

[1] e. g. 282, 23; 294, 23; 450, 13; 482, 9.

[2] Gegenwärtiger Stand, &c., pp. 8-10.

have traces of a partial revision of the Bede in the younger group of MSS. mentioned above, in which not only does the translation vary, at times very considerably [1], but a passage is inserted which the earlier recension omits [2], and conversely [3]. When this partial revision was made I cannot say, but probably not by Alfred himself. On the whole, then, I do not regard Mr. Sweet's or Dr. Miller's argument as conclusive, either against Alfred's authorship of the Bede translation, or against the priority of the Orosius.

Omissions made by Alfred in the Bede.

§ 107. I have already said [4] that the principal changes made by Alfred in the Bede are in the way of omission, the additions being comparatively slight. It is worth while to see what considerations guided him in this. First of all he omits almost all documents [5], in two instances he just gives a brief summary of a letter in oratio obliqua [6]. He seems at first to have intended to omit the interrogations and responses of Augustine and Gregory, but afterwards to have changed his mind, as in all the MSS. they occur after the third book instead of in their proper place near the end of the first [7]. He also omits all the metrical compositions, epitaphs, &c.[8], which occur in the course of the work. Then, too, he omits almost everything bearing on the Easter Controversy [9]; partly no doubt because he

The Easter Controversy.

[1] See the parallel texts in Schipper's edition, pp. 266–270, 273–275.

[2] ibid. 271–272 (= Miller, p. 206). This passage relates to the Easter Controversy.

[3] ibid. 276–285 (= Miller, pp. 210 ff.). Another passage, Schipper, pp. 133–140 (= Miller, pp. 110 ff.), is omitted in two of the younger group of MSS.; but as it is contained in the third, its omission in the two others was probably due to some mutilation of their common original.

[4] Above, § 98.

[5] H. E. i. 24, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32; ii. 4, 8, 10, 11, 17, 18, 19; v. 21.

[6] H. E. i. 23; iii. 29; the Canons of the Council of Hertford are retained, iv. 5.

[7] ibid. i. 27.

[8] ibid. iv. 20; v. 7, 8, 19; ii. 1, is an exception; here Gregory's epitaph is translated into prose.

[9] ibid. ii. 2 (a few lines); iii. 3

lt, as modern readers feel, the intolerable tediousness of ıe whole thing; but partly also, we may well believe, ecause he disliked the bitterness which even the gentle ede shows on this question[1], for there are little touches hich seem to prove that the piety and self-devotion of ıe Celtic missionaries had made a deep impression on his eart[2]. The early history prior to the conversion of the axons is also a good deal abbreviated[3], no doubt as having ss direct interest for his readers. So the description of ıe sacred places which Bede largely borrowed from rculfus is omitted, probably for similar reasons[4].

The additions unimportant.

§ 108. It has often formed a subject both of wonder nd regret that Alfred should not have enriched the Bede ith additions drawn from his own knowledge of the raditions of his people, as he might so easily have done. leverence for his original may have had something to do ith this; but I agree with Professor Wülker[5] that the ıain reason probably was, because all that Alfred desired ı this line had already been done in the compilation of he Saxon Chronicle. It is confirmatory of this that the hronological summary appended to his history by Bede,

part), 4, 17 (part omitted in lder recension); 25, 26, 28 (a few ines); v. 21.

[1] Bede, I. xxxix ff.

[2] See Miller, pp. lvii ff.; and f. the characterisation Aidan as the *good* bishop,' 246, 26. One otes too with pleasure the omis- ion of the epithet 'prudens' vhich Bede strangely applies to oifi's purely material arguments n favour of Christianity, 134, 23 H. E. ii. 13).

[3] H. E. i. 2, 6 (this passage about Carausius is omitted also in the Orosius; here the omission causes a serious perversion of meaning, what is said of Carausius in the original being transferred to Maximianus in the translation); 8 (the passage about Arianism in Britain omitted), 9, 10, 11 (much shortened), 17–22; ii. 1 (shortened). In many cases however, in spite of the omission of a chapter, the capitulum belonging to it is retained and translated.

[4] ibid. v. 15–17.

[5] Grundriss, p. 406. This is contested by August Schmidt, u. s. pp. 28 ff.

which had, as I have elsewhere shown[1], such an important influence on the development of annalistic writing in general, and of the Saxon Chronicle in particular, is omitted in the Bede translation.

Smaller additions and expansions there are, but they seldom really add anything to the narrative. They are as a rule merely inserted to make it a little more clear[2] or a little more vivid, or a little more in accordance with the translator's ideas[3]. Occasionally, though rarely, they show a touch of personal feeling; as where Diocletian is characterised as the bad emperor[4], Constantine as the good emperor[5], and Aidan as the good bishop[6]. Sometimes, as in the other works, they are brief explanations of things which the readers might not know[7]. Occasionally statements of Bede's are altered[8], or omitted[9], because they were no longer applicable, or they are marked distinctly as being Bede's and not Alfred's[10]. But in other cases similar statements are retained, though it would not be safe to argue from this that the state of things indicated still subsisted in Alfred's day[11].

[1] Chronicle, II. xxi, lxi, lxviii, cxiii.

[2] e.g. 40, 8; 46, 11; 114, 11; 120, 7; 156, 1; 158, 28; 164, 14; 166, 32; 174, 25; 178, 17; 188, 23. 25 (name of Bamborough inserted, which name is nowhere mentioned by Bede); 238, 31; 240, 27 (here the insertion was necessitated by the preceding omission; so at 246, 33); 242, 19; 264, 11; 338, 8. 25; 374, 26; 390, 20; 394, 24. 29; 438, 1. 8; 464, 6.

[3] 166, 10 (the addition of '7 cyste,' 'and kissed it,' to the account of Aidan blessing Oswald's bounteous hand); 162, 2; 370, 29; 380, 18; 412, 15; cf. 58, 26; 102, 31; 130, 32; 174, 30 ff.; 184, 34; 232, 19.

[4] 32, 10.

[5] 42, 16.

[6] 246, 26.

[7] e.g. 240, 20; 256, 8; 346, 7; 390, 6; 422, 8; 424, 20; 428, 24; 442, 27. 29; 456, 13.

[8] 382, 19; 422, 15 ff.; 448, 19; 466, 27.

[9] 52, 5. 11; 166, 23; 278, 30.

[10] 144, 9; 186, 33; 216, 23; 448, 10.

[11] 150, 13; 154, 19; 156, 5; 166, 16; 178, 14; 182, 11; 202, 12;

Here too there are mistakes[1], though fewer and less erious than in the Orosius. In some cases they may be ue to erroneous readings in the MS. which Alfred used[2]. n one or two instances Alfred's version shows a remarkable ivergence of historical fact, which can hardly arise wholly rom misunderstanding[3]. Mistakes.

But on the whole the translation is a worthy one, preserving, and in one or two instances enhancing[4], the eauty of the original, the most beautiful historical work vhich the Church had produced since Luke and John wrote heir Gospels. Merits of the translation.

One incidental merit of the translation, as Stubbs has emarked[5], is that it enables us to equate the Saxon echnical terms of officers and institutions with the corre- sponding Latin ones[6].

268, 13 (a reference to one of Bede's teachers); 446, 19 (statement that Daniel was still bishop of Winchester); 472, 23 (the statement that the Britons still retained their incorrect Easter, though all the Celts had submitted before the end of the eighth century; see Bede, I. xxxix). In one case Alfred by inserting the words 'oð þas tid,' 'up to the present time,' does seem to pledge himself to the truth of the statement in his own day, 176, 20.

[1] 152, 23 (Municipium treated as a proper name); 292, 20; 334, 7; 340, 34; 370, 15.

[2] 118, 7 (*episcopum* instead of *episcopium*; this misreading is found in some Latin MSS.); 154, 3; and 306, 20 (*troicus* instead of *tragicus* or *stragicus*); 242, 31 (*a Deo* instead of *adeo*); 340, 8 (*de tecto* instead of *detecta*); 388, 33 (*praeponere* instead of *proponere*); 436, 26 (siuimet [i. e. sibimet] instead of *suimet*).

[3] 4, 2 ff.; 98, 6; 236, 7 ff.; for lesser divergences cf. 178, 22; 258, 15; 388, 6.

[4] e. g. Pope Gregory and the Anglian slave boys, 96, 31; the death of Cædmon, 348, 10.

[5] Const. Hist. i. 70, 71, 111.

[6] I give a list of the more important terms:—heretoga = dux, 148; ealdormen 7 heretogan = duces regii, 236; ealdorman, which in some applications is equivalent to heretoga, is a vaguer and more general term, and represents a considerable number of Latin expressions; thus ealdormen = duces, 134, 158, 302; = maiores natu, 136, 158; = maiores, 348, 442, 450; = principes, 198, 240, 316, 334; = satrapae, 414; = subreguli, 298 (*bis*); ealdorman

The translation of Boethius.

§ 109. We come now to what is in many respects the most interesting and important of all Alfred's literary

= maior domus regiae, 256 (of Ebroin); þegna aldormon = primus ministrorum, 264; gerefa = praefectus, 194, 256; tun gerefa = uillicus, 344, 414; geþeahteras = consiliarii, 136, 454; witan = consiliarii, 134; = seniores, 452; in gemote heora weotona = in conuentu seniorum, 162; þegn = minister, 134, 146, 158, 196, 294, 462; cf. þinen = ministra, 318; þegnung = ministerium, 196; cwene þegn = reginae minister, 330; cyninges þegn = minister regis, 328; = miles regis, 150; = miles, 222, 302, 326 (*bis*), 418, cf. 436; þegn = miles, 194; gesið = comes, 194, 228, 274, 292, 326, 394; gesiðmann = comes, 22 (*bis*); æðelingas = nobiles, 138, 240, 242 (this is important as showing that æðeling was not restricted, as in later usage, to members of the royal house, though it is used of them, as the following examples show); æðeling (of a king's brother), 324; se geonga æðeling = regius iuuenis, iuuenis de regio genere, 130, 306; æðelingas þæs cynecynnes = nobiles ac regii uiri, 140; here = hostilis exercitus, 54; = exercitus, 356; fyrd = exercitus, 102; = expeditio, 30; fyrd 7 here = bellum, 168, 208; cynelic tun = uilla regia, 140; cyninges bold = uilla regia, 140; ham = uicani, 180; tunscipe = uicani, 416; wiic = mansio, 332, 388; sundorwic = mansio, 262; boclanda æht = praediorum possessiones, 236; heowscipe = familia (hide), 332; hiwisc = familia (hide), 456 (*bis*); hired = domus (household), 144; higna ealdor = pater familiae, 180; geferscipe = domus (household), 264; = clerus, 248, 398; cf. mid his geferum = cum clero suo, cum clericis suis, 364, 402; his preost 7 hond þeng = clericus illius, 456; ealdordom = primatus, 368; aldorbiscop = metropolitanus episcopus, 408; regolweard = praepositus, 362; so: prafost 7 regolweard, 360; prafost 7 ealdorman = propositi 232 (these three examples refer to the prior or provost of a monastery). In the Orosius we have æðelingas = regii iuuenes, 44; ealdorman = praefectus, 60, 84; but the most interesting instance is: Asiam [he] hæfde Romanum to boclande geseald = traditam per testamentum Romanis Asiam, 224; cf. the Soliloquies, p. 164: 'ælcne man lyst siððan he ænig cotlyf on his hlafordes *læne* myd his fultume getimbred hæfð, þæt he hine mote hwilum þaron gerestan, . . . oð þone fyrst þe he *bocland* 7 ece yrfe þurh his hlafordes miltse geearnige.' At p. 176 of the same work is a passage which perhaps illustrates the date of the use of seals in England, for I do not think there is anything corresponding to it in the original: 'geþenc nu gif ðines hlafordes ærendgewrit 7 his insegel to ðe cymð.' Another interesting passage illustrating the meeting of the Witan, the gathering of the

orks, viz. the translation of Boethius on the Consolation f Philosophy. It is here that the additions made by lfred to his original give us the clearest insight into his wn character and modes of thought. And the original is n itself one of the most noteworthy books of the Middle Ages. Just as Orosius was to those ages the accepted manual of universal history[1], and the Cura Pastoralis their accepted manual of Spiritual Counsel, so the Consolatio of Boethius was their accepted manual of practical and speculative philosophy; the one channel through which some tincture of ancient speculation passed into the popular thought of the early Middle Ages. Perhaps no book except the Bible and the Imitatio has been translated into so many languages; and in more than one European country the early translations of the Consolatio have had an important influence on the development of a vernacular literature[2]. For this popularity several reasons may be

Fame of the original in the Middle Ages.

Causes of

fyrd, the king's household, &c., is at p. 187: 'geðenc nu hweðer awiht manna cynges ham sece þer ðær he ðonne on tune byð, oððe his gemot, oððe his fyrd' &c.; cf. also pp. 200, 204. It is worth noting that the word 'carcern,' 'prison,' occurs first in Alfred's Laws (see Schmid, Gesetze, Glossary, s. v.), and is also of frequent occurrence in his works, Past. p. 329; Oros. p. 214; Boeth. i. (pp. 7, 8), xviii. § 4 (p. 45), xxxvii. § 1 (p. 111); Solil. pp. 202, 203. In the Psalter, which is possibly by Alfred, we have mention of the two *shires* of Judah and Benjamin, ed. Thorpe, p. 113; cf. ibid. 29 for an interesting reference to measurement of land with ropes. In the Dialogues we have the following: geréfa = praefectus, 340; = tribunus, 220; geréfman = primarius, 222; = curialis, 308; geréfscír = locus praefectorum; práfost = praepositus (in monastic sense), 344; ealdorman = comes, 220, 301. An interesting word is wlite-weorð, literally 'face-price' = ransom, 179.

[1] See Stewart's Boethius, p. 172; Moore, Dante Studies, i. 279–83; it may be noted that Augustine, Orosius, Gregory, Bede, and Boethius, all occur in Alcuin's catalogue of the York Library, De Sanctis Ebor. vv. 1535 ff. Still more interesting is the fact that Augustine, Orosius, Boethius, Bede, are mentioned within a few lines of one another, Paradiso, x. 118–32.

[2] On Boethius generally, see

this popularity; its form.

given. Something was probably due to the form of the work, which is written in that mixture of verse and prose known as the Satura Menippaea [1]. The lyrics of the Consolatio won the enthusiastic admiration of the great Renaissance scholar, F. C. Scaliger [2], and I must confess that to me they seem extremely beautiful, though their beauty is of a somewhat frosty order. But if they have something of the hardness and coldness of marble, they have also its purity and high polish [3]. But the chief reason was, no doubt, sympathy with the author's misfortunes, whose sudden fall, from being the favourite and chief minister of Theodoric, to prison and to death, made him one of the most signal examples in that ever-lengthening treatise De casibus illustrium uirorum, on which the Middle Ages pondered with intense and morbid interest, feeding that contempt for the world [4] and all things human, which finds such passionate expression in many mediaeval writings:—

Sympathy with the author.

'O esca uermium, o massa pulueris,
O ros, o uanitas, cur sic extolleris?' [5]

To this power of the work as a record of human suffering pathetic testimony is borne by the title of an anonymous French translation of the fifteenth century, which announces

Boethius, an essay by H. F. Stewart, 1891, a book from which I have learnt much. See also the article on Boethius in Dict. Christ. Biog.

[1] Stewart, p. 54.

[2] ibid., 78.

[3] Mr. Stewart, p. 106, puts it the other way; but I think the above statement does fuller justice to Boethius.

[4] Henry of Huntingdon and Petrarch among others wrote treatises De Contemptu Mundi. Boccaccio, as Mr. Archer reminds me, wrote a treatise De Casibus illustrium uirorum, on which Chaucer's Monk's Tale with the same title is founded.

[5] From a poem De Contemptu Mundi by Jacopone; Trench's Sacred Latin Poetry, 3rd ed., p. 270. The Rhythm of Bernard of Morlaix, from which come 'Jerusalem the Golden,' 'Brief life,' &c., has the same title.

itself as the work of 'un pauvre clerc désolé, quérant sa consolation par la traduction de cestui livre[1]'; it is the book to which Dante resorted for comfort after the death of Beatrice[2]; and our own Sir Thomas More while in prison wrote an imitation of Boethius, which he calls 'Three Books of Comfort in Tribulation[3].' 'Dost thou think,' asks Philosophy of Boethius in Alfred's translation, 'that to thee alone such change of state and sorrow have come[4]?' And, in spite of Tennyson, the fact 'that loss is common' does 'make Our own less bitter[5]'; and the 'sense of tears in mortal things[6]' knits mankind together in bonds of sympathy which do make the common burden lighter. And in the case of Boethius this natural feeling was heightened by the erroneous impression, which prevailed in the Middle Ages, that the sufferings of Boethius were due to the rage of an Arian ruler against his Catholic servant[7]. A superficial inspection of dates is sufficient to dispel this illusion[8]; and how little support it derives from

[1] Stewart, p. 203.

[2] 'Misimi a leggere quello non conosciuto da molti libro di Boezio, nel quale, cattivo e discacciato, consolato s' avea,' Conv. ii. 13. This statement that the book was 'not known by many' is curious. On the use of Boethius by Dante, see Dr. Moore, u. s. pp. 282-8, 355, 356.

[3] I have not read this book myself; but More's great-grandson Cresacre More describes it as 'a most excellent book, full of spiritual and forcible motives, expressing lively Sir Thomas' singular resolution to apply all those wholesome medicines to himself,' Life of Sir T. More, ch. x. ad init.

[4] c. viii, Sedgefield, p. 20; cf. c. vii. § 2, p. 15.

[5] In Memoriam, vi.

[6] Matthew Arnold, Geist's Grave.

'Sunt lacrimae rerum, et mentem mortalia tangunt.'

[7] On the strength of this, Boethius obtained the honours of saintship, Moore, u. s. p. 282. Dante places Boethius in heaven, but among the theologians in the Sun, Paradiso, x. 124 ff., not among the warriors and martyrs of the Cross in Mars; though he says of his soul—

'Ed essa da *martiro*
E da esilio venne a questa pace.'

[8] Stewart, p. 33.

the work itself is shown by the fact, that few questions in literary history have been more keenly debated than the question, whether the author was a Christian at all[1]. The question turns largely on the authenticity of certain theological tracts which bear the name of Boethius, and do not concern us here[2]. On the whole it is probable that Boethius was by profession a Christian, though it would seem that his Christianity did not go very deep. Certainly in the hour of trouble, which generally shows the real basis of a man's thought and character, he turns for consolation, not to the doctrines of Christianity, but to the teachings of Neo-platonic philosophy; and I unhesitatingly affirm that there is far more of the spirit of Christianity in the writings of acknowledged pagans like Seneca and Marcus Aurelius, than in this work of a nominal Christian, who enforces the duty of prayer, not by the authority of Christ and His Apostles, but by that of Plato in the Timaeus[3].

Was Boethius a Christian?

The Consolatio not distinctively Christian.

§ 110. It might have been thought that this absence of any distinctively Christian character would have militated against the popularity of the Consolatio in the Middle Ages. That it did not do so was due partly to causes already enumerated, partly to the fact that the non-Christian character of the work was to some extent concealed by the Christian interpretation given to various passages in the commentaries and glosses on Boethius; which interpretations were in turn embodied in the different translations of the Consolatio, at the head of which stands Alfred's version.

This non-Christian character concealed by glosses and commentaries,

This interesting fact, that many of the additions in Alfred's Boethius, especially those of a distinctly Christian character, are not really due to Alfred himself but to the

from which

[1] Stewart, pp. 1 ff.

[2] ibid., pp. 108 ff.

[3] 'Uti in Timaeo Platoni nostro placet, in minimis quoque rebus diuinum praesidium debet inplorari,' Lib. III, Prosa ix.

glosses and commentaries which were used by him or his learned assistants, was first pointed out by Dr. Schepss in a very suggestive article in the Archiv für's Studium der neueren Sprachen[1]. It is much to be regretted that Dr. Schepss' death prevented him from pursuing this line of investigation further. Till this field has been fully explored, we incur the danger of citing as specially characteristic of Alfred something which he only borrowed from others. In some instances I have noticed that the additions made by Alfred are really taken from, or at least suggested by other passages in the text of Boethius[2]. But, when all deductions have been made, there remains enough that we may safely take as evidence of Alfred's thought and feeling. I have already cited the passage bearing on the needs and instruments of a king[3]. This was to some extent suggested by a commentary, but it is instinct with the mind of Alfred, as is the oft-quoted sentence with which the chapter closes: 'My will was to live worthily as long as I lived, and after my life to leave to them that should come after my memory in good works[4].' Very Alfredian too are the thoughts that reward

many of Alfred's additions are derived.

Yet the additions illustrate Alfred's thought.

[1] Vol. xciv, 149 ff.; many of Dr. Schepss' instances are reproduced in Mr. Sedgefield's Introduction, pp. xxxi ff. Among the most distinctly Christian interpretations are: the references to the heavenly Jerusalem, c. v. § 1 (p. 11), cf. c. xxxvi. § 2 (p. 105); and to the martyrs, c. xi. ad fin. (p. 26); the beautiful saying that 'Christ dwelleth in the valley of humility,' c. xii (p. 27); the Christian application given to the fable of Eurydice, c. xxxv. ad fin. (p. 103); the identification of the rebellion of the giants with Nimrod's building of the Tower of Babel, c. xxxv. § 4 (p. 99).

[2] Thus the addition in c. xxiv. § 3 (p. 54) on the worth of friends, is a repetition of c. xx. ad fin. (p. 48); the sentence against living a soft life, c. xxxix. § 10 ad fin. (p. 133), anticipates c. xl. § 3 (p. 138); the thought that the temporal prosperity of the good is a foreshadowing of their eternal happiness, c. xxxix. § 11 (p. 134), anticipates c. xl. § 2 (p. 137).

[3] Above, § 87.

[4] c. xvii. pp. 40, 41.

should not be looked for in this world[1], but should be sought from God alone[2]; that a good name is better than any wealth[3]; that true nobility is of the mind, not of the body[4]; that an honest purpose is accepted, even though its accomplishment be frustrated[5]; that a king without free subjects is nothing worth[6]; that no one should be idle[7], or wish to live a soft life[8]. But perhaps the noblest passage is that in which by a splendid metaphor Philosophy is made to say: 'When I with my servants mount aloft, then do we look down upon the stormy world, even as the eagle when he soars above the clouds in stormy weather, so that the storms cannot hurt him[9]';—a metaphor which so strikingly expresses Alfred's own soaring superiority to what he elsewhere calls 'the wind of stern labours, and the rain of excessive anxiety[10].'

Wealth of similes in the translation.

And this brings me to another point. If any one will look through the additions made by Alfred to the text of Boethius, which are very conveniently distinguished by italic type in Mr. Sedgefield's handy rendering of Alfred's version into modern English[11], he can hardly fail to notice how many of them consist in metaphors and similes; none perhaps so fine as that just quoted, but often of great interest and beauty[12]. Even where the simile was sug-

[1] c. vii. § 3 (p. 18).
[2] c. xviii. § 4 (p. 45).
[3] c. xiii. (p. 28).
[4] c. xxx. §§ 1, 2 (p. 69).
[5] c. xxxvi. § 8 (p. 110); c. xli. § 2 (p. 142).
[6] c. xli. § 2 (p. 142)
[7] ibid. § 3 (p. 144).
[8] See note 2, p. 181.
[9] c. vii. § 3 (p. 18).
[10] c. xii. ad fin. (p. 27).
[11] Clarendon Press, 1900.
[12] See pp. 26, 27, 34, 53 (simile of the rivers and the sea, repeated pp. 82, 83, 86); 57 (the wheel, repeated p. 81, and p. 129, where there is a hint of it in the text, which is most elaborately developed under the influence of a commentary); 70, 72, 86 (similes of the stars and of soul and body); 90 (the ingot); 93 (sifting meal); 108 (child riding a hobby-horse); 97 (chink in the door); 117 (scattered like smoke); ibid. (crash of a falling tree); 121 (weak eyes); 144 (steersman foreseeing the tempest).

ested by something in the text or commentary which Alfred had before him, it is often developed at much greater length. This is a point of some interest, because it shows that Alfred's mind was of the class which delights in parable and figure, and makes it not unreasonable to look for deeper meanings in what he wrote and wrought[1].

Discussion on Fate and Free-will.

§ 111. I have said that the subject of fate occupies a prominent place in the Consolatio and in Alfred's translation of it[2]. The relation of fate to providence, of divine foreknowledge to human freedom, the nature of evil, the existence of chance, these are the high themes round which much of the latter part of the argument circles. They are the themes which occupied the more intellectual spirits among Milton's fallen angels:—

> 'Others apart sat on a hill retired
> In thoughts more elevate, and reason'd high
> Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,
> Fix'd fate, freewill, foreknowledge absolute,
> And found no end, in wand'ring mazes lost[3].'

And fallen man has succeeded as little as fallen angel in solving these high doubts. Alfred realises, as indeed does Boethius, the arduous nature of the inquiry; and his conclusion is, as we should expect, much more than is the case with Boethius, the conclusion of Christian faith and practical Christian piety: 'I say, as do all Christian men, that it is the divine purpose that rules, and not Fate[4].' He sees, as all moralists have seen, that morality is only possible on a basis of freedom, that fatalism reduces vice and virtue, punishment and reward to unmeaning terms[5].

[1] Cf. Earle, Alfred Jewel, pp. 161 ff.

[2] See especially cc. xxxix–xli; cf. also c. v. § 3, c. xi. § 2, c. xx. ad init.; cf. above, p. 159.

[3] Paradise Lost, ii. 557 ff.

[4] c. xxxix. § 8 (p. 131).

[5] Cf. Dante, Purg. xvi. 70–2.

'To men and to angels God gave the gift of freedom that they might do good or evil, whichever they pleased [1]. . . . But if it be true that the good and the wicked are so made as to be unable to act otherwise than they do, then vain is our labour when we pray, and fast, or give alms, if we have no more thank therefor than those who in all things . . . run after their fleshly lusts [2]; . . . and vain too is the commandment which God gave to man that he should eschew evil and do good [3].' God knows all our works, before we even conceive them in our thought; but this knowledge is not a cause compelling us so to act, any more than the knowledge of the steersman that a storm is coming, is the cause of the storm [4].

Other points characteristic of Alfred.

There are other points which illustrate Alfred's studies, tastes, and circumstances; the saying that in the golden age no one had heard of a pirate host [5]; the allusion to the wise goldsmith, Weland [6]; the explanations about India and Thule [7].

And there are things in the text itself which evidently come home to Alfred; the beauty of gems [8], the fairness of the country-side—the fairest of all God's creations [9], the song of the birds in the woods [10], the worth of friends [11]; the stories of kings reduced to poverty [12], of

[1] c. xli. § 2 (p. 142).
[2] ibid.
[3] ibid. § 3 (p. 143).
[4] ibid. (p. 144). Dante has a still more subtle comparison—

'La contingenza . . .
Tutta è dipinta nel cospetto eterno.
Necessità però quindi non prende,
Se non come dal viso in che si specchia
Nave che per corrente giù discende.'

Parad. xvii. 37–42.

[5] Sciphere, c. xv (p. 34).
[6] c. xix (p. 46).
[7] c. xxix. § 3 (p. 67); cf. the Orosius translation, pp. 10, 24.
[8] c. xiii (p. 28).
[9] c. xiv. ad init. (p. 29).
[10] c. xxv (p. 57).
[11] See note 2, p. 181.
[12] c. xxix. § 1 (p. 65).

the sword of Damocles[1], the joy of a calm haven after storms[2].

Here too, as in the case of the Orosius, Alfred has modified his original by omissions as well as additions; but it is unnecessary to go minutely into this point, as Mr. Sedgefield has prefixed to his edition of Alfred's version an elaborate table showing the relation of that version to the original[3]. Omissions.

§ 112. In regard to the translation as a whole no doubt has ever been expressed as to the authorship of Alfred[4]; and it is the only one of Alfred's works which is mentioned by name by Ethelwerd, who wrote towards the end of the tenth century[5]. There is, however, an interesting literary question connected with it, which is this. The translation exists in only two MSS., one in the Cottonian Collection[6], the other in the Bodleian[7]. In the older or Cottonian MS. the metrical parts of Boethius are, with three exceptions[8], rendered into alliterative Saxon verse; No doubt as to Alfred's authorship of the prose translation.

[1] c. xxix. § 1 (p. 65).

[2] c. xxxiv. § 8; cf. Spenser's musical lines:

'Sleepe after toyle, port after stormie seas,
Ease after warre, death after life does greatly please.'

Faerie Queene, I. ix. 40; cf. II. xii. 32.

[3] pp. xxv ff.

[4] The statement of the late Liber de Hyda, p. 44, that Werferth translated the Boethius for Alfred, as well as the Dialogues, is totally unsupported, and the style of the two works is as different as possible.

[5] 519 A; he calls it 'liber Boetii lachrymosus'; he says, however, that Alfred translated other works 'numero ignoto.'

[6] Otho A. vi, of the tenth century, but much injured in the Cottonian fire of 1731.

[7] Bodl. 180 (2079); early twelfth century. There are also some transcripts and various readings taken by Junius from these two MSS.

[8] Lib. I. metr. 6; Lib. II. metr. 2; Lib. IV. metr. 7. The reason of this omission is probably due to the fact, that in these three instances Alfred's prose translation omits the formula with which it generally introduces the Metra: 'Then Wisdom began to sing.' This has been made an argument against Alfred's authorship of the Metra. But it is surely quite

in the later or Bodleian MS. they are rendered into prose.

Did he also write the alliterative version of the Metra?

It is as to Alfred's authorship of the alliterative poems that the controversy has raged; and those who deny their authenticity are compelled to deny also the authenticity of the two proems in prose and verse[1], in both of which the poems are distinctly ascribed to Alfred. The question, though interesting as a literary problem, is not intrinsically of great importance. The poems are not of the highest order, though they have been, I think, unduly depreciated. Alfred's fame will not be much exalted if he wrote them, or much depressed if they should be adjudged to another.

The negative arguments for the most part purely subjective.

I must confess, however, that a great deal of the argument on the negative side seems to me to be of that purely arbitrary and subjective kind which in its ultimate analysis amounts to this: 'it can't have been so, because I don't think that it was[2].'

§ 113. One thing is agreed on all sides; the verse translation is made from the prose translation, and is not an independent rendering made direct from the Latin; and the main argument of the negative critics is that it is impossible to suppose that a man like Alfred can have

possible that Alfred, coming back to his work after some time (see below, pp. 189 f.), and making his alliterative version without fresh reference to the Latin, should, in the absence of the usual formula, have overlooked the poetical character of these sections. In one case, Lib. I. metr. 7, the introductory formula is wanting, and yet the section exists in the verse translation. But here the poetical character of the section is much more obvious, and it is followed by a formula which often follows the Metra, 'then was Wisdom silent for a while,' c. vii. ad init.; so cc. xvii. ad init., xxiv. ad init., xxxix. §§ 2, 4, xli. § 2. A still more frequent concluding formula is 'ða ongan he eft spellian.'

[1] Sedgefield, pp. 1, 151.

[2] e. g. Leicht: 'schon die veränderte Form, die Alliteration und der mit ihr verbundene Stil *mussten* darauf führen dass neue Gedanken angeregt wurden, wenn der Dichter derselben fähig war,' cited in Wülker, Grundriss, p. 431. This 'mussten' is, to use a favourite formula of German criticism, 'rein willkürlich.'

occupied himself in turning his own vigorous prose into indifferent verse. On this I would remark: first, does it follow, because Alfred was a great man and a great prose-writer, that he was also necessarily a considerable poet[1]? Secondly, if Alfred wrote the verses, does it necessarily follow that *he* thought them poor and unworthy of the trouble of making? Great writers are not always gifted with the faculty of self-criticism; otherwise we should not have Wordsworth taking apparently equal pleasure in the composition of Betty Foy and of Laodamia. Indeed, on my conscience, I believe that he liked Betty Foy the better of the two[2]. Thirdly, even if Alfred were conscious of his limitations as a poet, is it not possible that his conscientious spirit may have felt bound to give as true a representation of the original as possible, by reproducing one of its most salient features, the alternation of verse and prose? In truth this style of criticism, if logically carried out, would lead us very far. It would prove, for instance, that at least two hands were concerned in the composition of the third book of Wordsworth's Prelude. That book contains the glorious and well-known lines:—

Logical result of this style of criticism.

'And from my pillow, looking forth by light
Of Moon or favouring Stars, I could behold
The antechapel where the statue stood
Of Newton with his prism and silent face,
The marble index of a mind for ever
Voyaging through strange seas of thought, alone.'

But it also contains the no less well-known, but most inglorious line:

[1] So Hartmann, in Wülker, p. 425.

[2] Of Betty Foy he says, 'I never wrote anything with so much glee'; of Laodamia, 'It cost me more trouble than almost anything of equal length I have ever written,' Morley's edition, pp. 83, 530.

And at the *Hoop* alighted, famous Inn.

It would also prove (to take a closer parallel) that the late Professor Conington never wrote a verse translation of the Aeneid. Unlike Alfred, Mr. Conington was, as we all know, a very considerable Latin scholar; but I must be pardoned for saying that, like Alfred, he was not a very considerable poet. He wrote a prose translation of the Aeneid, of which he thought so little that it was not published till after his death; he wrote a verse translation of the same poem, of which he evidently thought a good deal. Yet can we not imagine a German critic a thousand years hence arguing that the author of the prose translation could never have penned a couplet like the following?—

'Three calves to Eryx next he kills,
A lambkin's blood to Tempest spills[1].'

Probability that the prose version of the Metra was intended merely as a basis for the verse translation.

§ 114. For my own part, so far from regarding the existence of the prose translation of Boethius' Metra as inconsistent with Alfred's authorship of the alliterative version, I am inclined to regard the former as intended from the first to serve as the basis of the latter. I would bring into connexion with this the interesting statement of William of Malmesbury, that Asser, for Alfred's benefit, unravelled the meaning of the De Consolatione in plainer words; 'a labour,' says Malmesbury, with the sniff of the superior person, 'in those days necessary, in ours ridiculous[2].' Zimmermann understood this as meaning a pre-

[1] p. 167: 'Tres Eryci uitulos, et Tempestatibus agnam,' Aen. v. 772.

[2] The passage occurs both in the Gesta Regum and in the Gesta Pontificum. In the former it runs thus: 'sensum librorum Boetii de Consolatione planioribus uerbis enodauit, quos rex ipse in Anglicam linguam uertit,' i. 131; in the latter 'elucidauit' is substituted for 'enodauit,' and the supercilious words are added: 'labore illis diebus necessario, nostris ridiculo,' p. 177. The G. Pont. is later than the G. Regum, see G. R., I. xix.

minary translation made by Asser. 'Entschieden falsch,' ries Professor Wülker[1], with the usual brusqueness of German critic. But the criticism may be retorted on is own explanation that Asser glossed a manuscript for he king's use. The passage clearly refers to a paraphrase f the original in simpler language, and more natural rder, like that which occupies the margin of some of the Delphin Classics, an illustration which had occurred to nyself before I knew that Dr. Schepss had also made use f it in his admirable essay referred to above[2]. It is an nteresting fact that in the case of early High German we possess just such a paraphrase of this very work. This is how Mr. Stewart, in his excellent monograph on Boethius, describes the translation of the Consolatio made by Notker III of St. Gallen, about a century after Alfred's time: 'His method of translation is to give a sentence or group of words of the original, which he arranges for the sake of his pupils in as simple and straightforward a form as possible, followed by the German equivalent. This last is expanded, as the occasion seems to require, by passages of explanation and paraphrase of varying length[3].' Except as to the 'German equivalent,' this illustrates very aptly what I conceive to have been Asser's procedure. It also illustrates the way in which many of Alfred's additions may have found their way into his translation. And it would be especially in the poetical portions of the work that such a paraphrase, giving the words of the original in a less intricate order, would be required. So that while Asser paraphrased Boethius' poetry in prose, Alfred, by a reverse process, first translated Asser's prose into prose, and then at a later time paraphrased his own prose version in verse. That, in the interval which elapsed between the two versions, the earlier edition should have been copied

Illustration from the Old High German version.

Mutual relations

[1] Grundriss, p. 427. [2] u. s., p. 159. [3] u. s., p. 193.

of the two editions.

and circulated, that at a later time scribes should have prefixed to copies of the first edition the prose proem which in strictness is only applicable to the second, is easily intelligible[1]; and it is curious that to this also an almost exact parallel can be produced from the fortunes of the Consolatio in another European country. There exist in French two thirteenth-century translations of the Consolatio. To quote Mr. Stewart once more: 'The one is in prose, a word-for-word rendering; . . . the other, a more scholarly performance, follows the scheme of the Latin original'; i. e. in the alternation of verse and prose. Yet to both versions the same prologue is prefixed, in which the translation which follows is in each case attributed to Jehan de Meun[2]. That Alfred intended from the first to give a verse rendering of the Metra, and that he did not see his way at once to carry out his intention, seems to me to be hinted at in a passage near the end of the book, which has very little corresponding to it in the original: 'It is nigh unto the time when I had purposed to take other work in hand, and I have not yet done with this; . . . I cannot now so soon sing it, nor have I leisure therefor[3].'

Illustration from two French versions.

Another point which, as Hartmann showed[4], tells in favour of Alfred's authorship is the way in which in the poems references are made to the prose portions of the work.

[1] The first edition would probably have no preface of its own, because Alfred regarded it as only a preliminary draft.

[2] Stewart, u. s., p. 202.

[3] c. xxxix. § 4 ad fin. (p. 127). Leicht is absolutely arbitrary when he says: 'wir dürfen nicht annehmen dass er, als er an seine Prosa-Uebersetzung ging, schon den Plan hatte, später der Form seiner Vorlage insofern mehr Gerechtigkeit widerfahren zu lassen, als er die Metra in das Gewand der angelsächsischen Dichtung kleiden wollte,' Wülker, p. 430. This is precisely what we may very fairly suppose on the evidence.

[4] In Wülker, Grundriss, p. 426; e. g. ix. 61 (p. 164), xxi. 3, 4 (p. 185), xxvi. 3 (p. 193), xxvii. 30 (p. 198).

On the whole I regard the attack on Alfred's authorship of the Metra as having decidedly broken down[1]; and in his opinion I am glad to have the concurrence of a very competent critic in the Times of August 20, 1901. I am breaking no confidence in identifying that critic with my friend and teacher Professor Earle.

The attack has broken down.

§ 115. The last undoubted work of Alfred's that has come down to us is one which bears the title 'Blooms,' or, as we might say, 'Anthology[2].' The first two books are derived mainly from St. Augustine's two books of Soliloquies. The first book and part of the second follow the original fairly closely, but the remainder of the second book is very free, and is mainly Alfred's own. The third book is based to some extent on St. Augustine's Epistle to Paulina on the Vision of God, with additions from the De Ciuitate Dei, St. Gregory's Dialogues, the Moralia, together with reflexions of Alfred's own[3]. The use of the De Ciuitate Dei is especially interesting, as it was the favourite

Alfred's last work, the Soliloquies, or 'Blooms.'

[1] The two points in which the Metra are said to show less accuracy than the prose version, viz. the making Ulysses king of Thracia instead of Ithaca, and calling Homer the *friend* as well as the teacher of Virgil, are possibly merely due to the needs of alliteration, xxvi. 7; xxx. 3 (pp. 193, 203). Almost the only thing in the Metra to which there is nothing corresponding in the prose version is the well-known simile of the egg, xx. 169 ff. (p. 182), and this, though possibly suggested by a commentary, is thoroughly Alfredian. Editors have, I think, unduly prejudiced the question by either omitting the Metra altogether (as Cardale, who merely gives one as a specimen), or printing them as a sort of appendix at the end. It would be fairer to print them in the text in parallel columns with the prose version, an arrangement which would also greatly facilitate the study of them. They have, be it remembered, the authority of the MS. which is by nearly 200 years the more ancient of the two.

[2] On the editions of this work, see above, p. 128, note 4. See also Professor Wülker's interesting Essay, Paul und Braune, Beiträge, iv. 101 ff., to which I am much indebted; also Grundriss, pp. 415 ff.

[3] Wülker, Beiträge, pp. 119, 120.

book of Charles the Great[1]. It is a noteworthy proof of Alfred's advance in literary art, that whereas in this third book his materials were not originally in dialogue form, he has very skilfully thrown them into that form in order to make them harmonise with the first two books.

Bad state of the text.

The work has come down to us in a pitiable condition, in a single late and corrupt manuscript, mutilated both at the beginning and end, and with evident lacunae in other places. At the beginning part of the preface is gone; at the end I do not myself think that more is lost than part of the final colophon; the concluding words of the actual text seem to me to mark undoubtedly the close of the work. Professor Wülker indeed thought otherwise; but he was led to his conclusion partly by the wish to give greater probability to his theory which would identify this work with Alfred's Encheiridion or Commonplace Book; a theory from which, as already stated[2], I strongly dissent, and which Wülker himself has since withdrawn[3]. Still even in its ruin the work reflects clearly the features of its author. The Preface in particular is so characteristic that, as it is comparatively little known, I give it here:—

The Preface.

'I gathered me then staves, and props, and bars, and helves for each of my tools, and boughs; and for each of the works that I could work, I took the fairest trees, so far as I might carry them away. Nor did I ever bring any burden home without longing to bring home the whole wood, if that might be; for in every tree I saw something of which I had need at home. Wherefore I exhort every one who is strong and has many wains, that he direct his steps to the same wood where I cut the props. Let him there get him others, and load his wains with fair twigs,

[1] 'Delectabatur et libris S. Augustini, praecipueque his qui de Ciuitate Dei praetitulati sunt,' Einhard, c. 24.

[2] Above, p. 141.

[3] Grundriss, p. 419.

hat he may weave thereof many a goodly wain, and set up nany a noble house, and build many a pleasant town, and lwell therein in mirth, and ease, both winter and summer, is I could never do hitherto. But He who taught me to ove that wood, He may cause me to dwell more easily, both in this transitory dwelling . . . while I am in the world, and also in the eternal home which He has promised us through . . . the holy fathers. And so I believe He will do for their merits, both make this [earthly] way better than it was ere this, or at least enlighten the eyes of my mind, that I may find the right way to the eternal home, and to the eternal country, and to the eternal rest, which is promised to us through the holy fathers. So be it.'

Significance of this Preface.

§ 116. It is Alfred looking back over the whole of his storm-tossed life, and realising that the calm haven is close at hand[1], and that he must leave it to others to carry on the work which he had begun. Professor Wülker, in the interest of the theory alluded to above, says that this preface refers to a larger collection than any to be found in these three books of 'Blooms[2].' True; most true. But the larger collection to which it refers is not this, or any other single work of his, however hypothetically enlarged; but the whole of his literary works. And just as the Preface to the Pastoral Care is in some sense a Prologue to the whole collection, so this is, in a very real sense, the Epilogue. We may not, here in Oxford, claim Alfred as our founder; but surely our hearts may be uplifted at the thought, that in all that we do here in the cause of true learning and of genuine education, we are carrying on the work which Alfred left us to do.

It is the Epilogue to Alfred's literary works.

The most mature of

The book is in other ways also the most mature of Alfred's works. It is very closely related to the Boethius

[1] Above, § 90.

[2] Beiträge, u. s. pp. 129, 130.

Alfred's works.

both in thought and diction[1]. And just as in the Orosius we had a foretaste of the discussion on fate which holds so prominent a place in the Boethius[2], so the subject of the immortality of the soul, which is only just touched on in the Boethius[3], is here developed at length[4]. And here, as in the Boethius, Alfred's conclusion is much more distinctly Christian than that of his original. The Soliloquies is one of Augustine's earliest works, written at a time when a good deal of the gentile rhetorician still hung about him[5]. It must be confessed that his philosophical arguments on

[1] Evil is really non-existent, Boethius, xxxv. § 5, xxxvii. § 4 (pp. 100, 114); Blooms, p. 165. God the highest good and happiness, Boet. xxxiv. §§ 2, 5, 6 (pp. 84, 86, 87); Bl. p. 166. God regulates all things with His bridle, Boet. xx. § 1 (p. 49); Bl. p. 168. God gave freedom to men, Boet. xli. §§ 3, 4 (pp. 143, 145); Bl. p. 168. The open door, Boet. xxxv. § 3 (p. 97); Bl. p. 169. Metaphor of the Egg, Boet. Metr. xx. 169 ff. (p. 182); Bl. p. 174 (this has an important bearing on the authorship of the verse translation of the Metra). Calm haven (weather) after storms, Boet. xxxiv. § 8 (p. 89); Bl. p. 179. Metaphor of weak eyes, Boet. xxxviii. § 5 (p. 121); Bl. p. 182. Against a soft life, Boet. xl. § 3 (p. 138); Bl. p. 184. The leech gives different kinds of medicine, Boet. xxxix. § 9 (p. 132); Bl. p. 189. Things lighted by the sun, Boet. xxxiv. § 5 (p. 86); Bl. p. 180. Men and angels immortal, Boet. xlii. (p. 148); Bl. p. 191. Various paths all leading to one end, Boet. xxiv. § 1 (p. 52); Bl. p. 187. The soul released from prison at death, Boet. xviii. § 4 (p. 45); Bl. p. 202. For an analysis of the thought and diction of the 'Blooms' as compared with the Boethius, see a good Essay by F. G. Hubbard, Modern Language Notes, ix. 322 ff. My own list was made independently. Mr. Hubbard remarks that in several cases a passage, which is an addition to the original in the 'Blooms,' corresponds with a translated passage in the Boethius. This seems to show that the Anglo-Saxon Boethius was one of the sources of the 'Blooms,' which must therefore be later than the Boethius. There is a dissertation by Hulme: Die Sprache der altengl. Bearbeitung der Soliloquien, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1894; but it is purely philological. A new edition of the 'Blooms' may be expected shortly from Mr. H. L. Hargrove of Yale.

[2] See above, pp. 159, 183-4.

[3] xi. § 2 (p. 26).

[4] pp. 192-5, 198, 199.

[5] See Ebert, Literatur des Mittelalters, i. 240, 241.

his subject are not very convincing, but in Alfred they are strongly reinforced by the authority of Scripture and of the fathers.

Wealth of similes.

Here, too, many of the additions which Alfred makes to his original consist of those similes and parables[1] which he loved so well; the most beautiful perhaps being one in which the soul made fast to God is compared to a ship riding securely on her anchor[2].

Confusion of author and translator.

§ 117. I have said that in the third book Alfred casts into a dialogue form materials which have not that shape in the original. The interlocutors still remain as before, Augustine and Reason. It is a quaint proof of the completeness with which Alfred lost the sense of translation in the consciousness of authorship, that in a passage where the De uidendo Deo is spoken of, the Augustine of the dialogue is made to say: 'I have not now leisure to go through all that book[3],' although the historical Augustine was the actual author of it.

Characteristic thoughts.

Of thoughts characteristic of Alfred I will quote but two. The first is this: 'No man may do aught of good unless God work with him. And yet no one should be idle and not attempt something in proportion to the powers which God gives him[4].' The other is contained in the last sentence of the book[5]. And I think you will feel with me that we have here 'the conclusion of the whole matter'; that anything added to this would be of the nature of an anticlimax: 'Therefore he seems to me a very foolish man, and very wretched, who will not increase his understanding while he is in the world, and ever wish and long to reach that endless life where all shall be made clear.'

[1] Some of these are cited above, p. 194, note 1.

[2] p. 175; cf. p. 179; of this too there is an anticipation in the Boethius, x. ad fin. (p. 23); cf. also the metaphor of the ship in Asser, 492 D [59].

[3] p. 200.

[4] p. 179.

[5] p. 204.

Alfred's last words.

They are the last words not merely of this book; they are the last words of Alfred to us all across the chasm of a thousand years. We have seen some reason for thinking that the earliest of Alfred's own works, the Pastoral Care, cannot be earlier than 894[1]; and as the years 894–6 were largely occupied with warfare[2], it is probable that Alfred's literary activity falls mainly into the last four years of his reign, those four silent years for which our authorities fail us almost wholly, but in which Alfred had something of that 'stillness' for which he wishes in the Preface to the Pastoral Care.

Alfred and his grandson Athelstan.

One little glimpse we do get of him during his later years. William of Malmesbury, who had special materials for the life of Athelstan[3], tells us how he, a child, like Alfred himself, of singular beauty and attractiveness, was invested by his famous grandsire, who discerned his early promise, with a scarlet cloak, a jewelled belt, and a Saxon sword with golden scabbard[4]. And thus Alfred inherited the twofold blessing of the Psalmist: 'Thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel.' Nor was it least among Alfred's blessings that he left a son like Edward, and a grandson like Athelstan, to carry on his work.

[1] Above, § 88.

[2] I do not, however, regard with some critics the occurrence of military operations in any year as necessarily excluding all literary activity in that year. Considering Alfred's energy, and the fact that military operations were to a large extent suspended in the winter, the assumption seems to me rather rash; Asser distinctly says that Alfred carried on his studies 'inter omnia alia mentis et corporis impedimenta,' 488 D [50]; and Alfred tells how he began the Cura Pastoralis 'ongemang oðrum mislicum 7 manifealdum bisgum ðisses kynerices'; cf. also Boethius, Prose Preface.

[3] W. M. II. lx. ff.

[4] ibid. i. 145; so in 838: 'Imperator [Louis the Pious] filium suum Karolum armis uirilibus, i. e. ense cinxit, corona regali caput insigniuit,' Theganus, Vita Hludouici, Pertz, ii. 643.

Death and character of Alfred.

§ 118. It was while he was occupied with these high thoughts of Providence and immortality, that he passed away. How the call came to him to quit these shadows for the 'life where all things are made clear' we do not know. We only know that it came on October 26, and probably in the year 900[1]. He was only fifty-two. But even if the tradition of his constant illness be rejected, he had been through what might well have worn out even a strong man in a shorter time. Those who witnessed the extinction of so great a light might have exclaimed with Shakespeare's tawny queen:

> 'And there is nothing left remarkable
> Beneath the visiting moon[2].'

Florence's noble panegyric on Alfred is well known, where he tells how there passed away 'Alfred the king of the Anglo-Saxons, the son of the most pious king Æthelwulf, the famous, the warlike, the victorious, the careful provider for the widow, the helpless[3], the orphan and the poor; the most skilled of Saxon poets, most dear to his own nation, courteous to all, most liberal; endowed with prudence, fortitude, justice and temperance; most patient in the infirmity from which he continually suffered; the most discerning investigator in executing justice, most watchful and devout in the service of God[4].' Even the turgid,

[1] See Chronicle, ii. 112-4; and add to the references there given, Ramsay, Foundations of England, i. 267; and an interesting little monograph on Alfred's Boyhood and Death, by W. B. Wildman, Sherborne, 1898.

[2] Antony and Cleopatra, iv. 13. 67.

[3] 'Pupillorum'; in Ps. ix. 34 (x. 16) 'pupillo tu eris adiutor' is paraphrased 'þu eart fultumiend þara þe nabbað nawðer ne fæder ne modor.' Cf. the elegy on the death of Charles the Great:—

> 'Pater cunctorum orphanorum, omnium
> Peregrinorum, uiduarum, uirginum.'

Printed at the end of Einhard's Life (ed. Pertz, 1863), p. 41.

[4] i. 116.

tasteless Ethelwerd becomes simple and dignified in the face of this great event. 'There passed from the world,' he says, 'the high-souled Alfred, the immovable pillar of the West Saxons; a man full of justice, learned in discourse, imbued especially with the sacred Scriptures, . . . whose body rests at Winchester in peace. O reader, breathe the prayer "Christ, the Redeemer, save his soul[1]."' He must be a stern Protestant who would refuse to obey Ethelwerd's behest.

Lessons of Alfred's life.

§ 119. Some of us probably know the story of the little boy who, when asked in an examination paper a foolish question as to what Alfred, if he were alive now, would think of certain present-day problems, made the sage reply: 'If King Alfred were alive now, he would be much too old to take any interest in politics.' It was an instance, sublime, though unconscious, of answering a fool according to his folly. And yet we should surely be wrong if we thought that, because Alfred died a thousand years ago, his life and work have therefore no lessons for ourselves.

Army.

The question may not be of dividing the national militia into two parts, one to be at home and one out; but the problem still confronts us how to provide an army which shall both defend our shores at home, and also be adequate to the needs of the empire abroad. The question may not

Navy.

be whether our ships shall be built on Frisian or on Danish lines; but there are problems of naval construction on the right solution of which the safety of England may very

Learning.

largely depend. The knowledge of Latin is happily not extinct among us now, as it practically was in Alfred's day; but the necessity still exists, which he felt so strongly, to mediate between the best thoughts of the past and the

Education.

needs and aspirations of the present; while in education

[1] p. 519 A.

we have hardly perhaps fully realised even Alfred's modest wish that 'all the youth of England of free men . . . be set to learn . . . until that they are well able to read English writing [1].'

Unity of administration.

Again, few things are more striking in Alfred, than the way in which he keeps an equal hand on all branches of the national life, army, navy, church, justice, finance, education, learning. It is no doubt a harder task to co-ordinate the administration of an empire with world-wide possessions and world-wide responsibilities, than of a little state like Wessex. But we need something of this unifying guidance from above, if our government is not to fall apart into a chaos of independent, and possibly jealous and hostile departments. But above all we need Alfred's high faith; a faith first of all, unswerving, unfaltering, in an over-ruling Providence, the guidance of a Higher Hand; but faith also in the destiny of his country and his people. Had he, like Burgred of Mercia, given up the struggle in despair, and gone as a pilgrim to Rome, no one in his own day would have thought the worse of him; and he might have won that pale halo of mediaeval saintship, which, as it was, he did not gain [2]. But England would have been lost to Christianity [3]; and Alfred had faith that it was not in the purposes of God so far to roll back the tide of progress, as to let England become once more a heathen land. Surely Alfred stands high in the muster roll of those 'Who through faith subdued kingdoms,

Faith in God,

and in England.

[1] Preface to Pastoral Care.

[2] Henry VI in 1441 did apply to Eugenius IV for Alfred's canonisation, Bekynton's Correspondence, i. 118, Rolls Series. I owe this reference to an interesting article in the London Quarterly for January 1902, which only came into my hands after the first three lectures were in type. The author, Mr. W. E. Collins, goes further than I can go in rejecting Asser, but his article is well worthy of attention.

[3] See Pauli, u. s. p. 126; cf. Essays, p. 13.

wrought righteousness, ... turned to flight the armies of the aliens[1].'

Personal character.

And we need scarcely less that force of individual character which was the secret, as we have seen, of so much of Alfred's power. To realise this, we have only to compare him for instance with Henry II, a man who in mere intellectual capacity was possibly his superior, and whose reign conferred incalculable benefits upon England. But his aims were merely selfish, and his life impure; and so the greatness of his achievement is known to few beyond professed students of history[2].

Comparison with other sovereigns; Queen Victoria,

§ 120. Of some points in which our late Queen resembled her great ancestor I had the honour of speaking before the University in another place[3]. But when we think of kings and emperors worthy to be compared with our own Alfred, the four names which perhaps most readily occur to us are Marcus Aurelius, the imperial saint of paganism, Louis IX, the royal saint of mediaevalism, Charles the Great, and our own Edward I. But the sad self-suppression of Marcus Aurelius, the melancholy refrain which seems to sigh through the golden book of his thoughts,

Marcus Aurelius,

'Entbehren sollst du, sollst entbehren[4],'

is as unlike Alfred's glad and willing service as anything can be.

Charles the Great.

Charles the Great is of course one of the most towering

[1] Heb. xi. 33, 34.

[2] 'Henry stands with Alfred, Canute, William the Conqueror, and Edward I, one of the conscious creators of English greatness ... If he had been a better man, his work would have been second to that of no character in history; had he been a weaker one than he was, England might have had to undergo for six hundred years the fate of France,' Stubbs, Benedict of Peterborough, II. xxxiii, xxxvi.

[3] Sermon preached before the University on the Sunday following the death of Her late Majesty; now printed as an appendix to the present volume.

[4] Faust, Part I, Scene iv.

figures in the whole of history. Alike in physical and intellectual strength he is head and shoulders above all his predecessors and successors. We have noticed several points of taste and character in which Alfred resembled him[1], and they were alike too in the large and generous activities of their many-sided natures. Charles worked no doubt on a gigantic scale, to which Alfred can make no pretence. But this very fact has given to Alfred's work a permanence which is wanting to that of Charles. Every succeeding century has but verified more and more Alfred's vision of a united England, and has led her on gradually to an empire of which neither Charles nor Alfred could have dreamed[2]. Every succeeding century has given the lie to Charles's system of a united Germany and France:

μέγα ἔργον, ὃ οὐ δύο γ' ἄνδρε φέροιεν,
οἷοι νῦν βροτοί εἰσ', ὅ δέ μιν ῥέα πάλλε καὶ οἷος[3].

But, apart from this, there are stains on Charles's character, from which Alfred is free; the lax morality for which Walafrid Strabo in a curious passage places him in purgatory[4], the occasional outbursts of cruelty which on one occasion led him to execute 4,500 rebel Saxons on a single day[5], have no counterpart in our English hero-king.

Edward I is one of the noblest monarchs who ever sat upon an earthly throne; brave, and dutiful, and true. But we have only to think of his lawyerlike, almost tradesmanlike, way of suing for his pound of flesh on the letter of his bond, and then recall Alfred's comment on the golden

Edward I.

[1] Above, pp. 38, 120, 125-6, 129, 131, 135, 160, 191.

[2] Cf. Lord Rosebery's inspiring address at Winchester (Humphreys', Piccadilly).

[3] Iliad, v. 303, 304.

[4] Cited by Ebert, ii. 151.

[5] 'Usque ad quattuor milia quingenti traditi, et . . . in loco qui Ferdi [Verden] uocatur, iussu regis omnes una die decollati sunt,' Einhardi Annales, sub anno 782.

rule: 'by this one law every one may know how he ought to judge another, he needs no other law book[1],' in order to feel the difference between them.

St. Louis.

It is only when I think of St. Louis that my heart becomes a little divided. St. Louis is, to my thinking, one of the most beautiful characters in the whole of history. His saintliness is no doubt of the mediaeval type. But this is not surprising, seeing that he lived in the thirteenth century, the central and culminating period of the Middle Ages. Dante, and Joan of Arc, and Thomas à Kempis are mediaeval too. And he went on Crusade, when, according to every utilitarian standard, he would have been better employed in governing his own kingdom. Yet I, at least, cannot love him less, because as a 'young man' he 'saw visions,' and went on the quest of the Holy Grail. And he was fortunate in his biographer. What would we not give to have, instead of Asser's stilted and confused Latin, a memoir of Alfred in our native tongue which might rank with Joinville's picture of his master? And yet in some ways the very saintliness of Louis became a curse to France; for it shed a consecration on an evil despotism, which finally exploded in one of the most hideous convulsions in history:

'Sword and fire,
Red ruin, and the breaking up of laws[2].'

It seems a hard thing to say, but there is a very real connexion between St. Louis and the French Revolution.

No deductions to be made from Alfred.

Alfred on the other hand is one of the very few rulers whose work in life, and whose memory after death have been, as far as may be said of anything here below, an unmixed blessing to their peoples. Alfred's aspiration has indeed been abundantly fulfilled: 'My will was

[1] See above, p. 124.

[2] Tennyson, Guinevere.

to live worthily as long as I lived; and after my life to leave to them that should come after my memory in good works[1].' If I have done something in these lectures to place so great a memory in a clearer light, and to sweep away some of the false traditions by which it has been obscured, I shall regard myself as having done a real, if humble, service, not only to historical truth, but also to the national life. We need to keep our historical memories not only fresh but true. For, in the words of the great historian, with the remembrance of whom I began these lectures: 'The healthy nation has a memory as well as aspirations involved in the consciousness of its identity; it has a past no less living than its future[2].'

[1] Above, p. 181.

[2] Hoveden, IV. lxxxi.

Subjection to the Higher Powers

A Sermon

PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 27, 1901

BEING THE SUNDAY AFTER THE DEATH OF OUR LATE
MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN
QUEEN VICTORIA

BY THE

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APPENDIX

'Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.... Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.'—Rom. xiii. 1, 7.

It is impossible, I think, to read the Epistles of the New Testament with any degree of attention, and not to see how anxious the writers are that the Christianity which they preach should not be regarded as a revolutionary and explosive force, upsetting and destroying existing institutions, social and political; how concerned they are that their converts should give no offence (beyond what was involved in the fact of their religion) to the heathen neighbours among whom they lived; that they should 'Walk in wisdom toward them that are without[1],' and have their 'conversation honest among the Gentiles[2]'; how careful they are to say no word which should disturb the existing relations of slaves and masters, of wives and husbands, of subjects and sovereigns; even though the sovereign, the husband, the master might be heathen, and the slave, the wife, the subject might be Christian. If there must be a breach, let it come from the heathen member of the bond. The rule for the Christian was: 'let him not depart[3].'

And, in thus writing, the Apostles were but following out the teaching and example of our Lord Himself. When He compares the kingdom of Heaven to leaven[4], He means,

[1] Col. iv. 5; cf. 1 Thess. iv. 12.
[2] 1 Pet. ii. 12.
[3] 1 Cor. vii. 10–17.
[4] Matt. xiii. 33; Luke xiii. 21.

I suppose, that the working of His doctrine was to be, as a rule, gradual and assimilative, not sudden and explosive.

And He Himself always refused to assume the part of a political agitator, or even of a social reformer, which His followers sometimes wished to thrust upon Him. 'He withdrew Himself,' when the multitudes threatened to 'take Him by force, to make Him a king[1]'; He would not be 'a judge or a divider' in matters of inheritance[2]. All social and political problems He left men to work out for themselves with the powers which God has given them, under the guidance and control of God's ordinary providence; and to apply for themselves to the solution of these problems the principles of His teaching, under the ordinary operations of the Holy Spirit. And this refusal to interfere with the normal development of human society emphasises all the more, as has been remarked[3], His uncompromising vindication of the law of marriage, as the one social institution the sanctity of which is above all human laws: 'God made them male and female[4].'

He would not agitate against the tribute[5]; though the refusal probably cost Him the popularity which had manifested itself so noisily in the triumphal entry. And, in His trial before Pilate, He distinctly recognised the Roman provincial government of Judaea, heathen and foreign though it was, as being divinely ordered: 'Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above[6].'

When the publicists of the middle ages, with Dante at their head, laid stress on the birth and death of Christ under the Roman Empire as giving a divine authority to that Empire, and to the mediaeval Empire which claimed to be its successor[7],

[1] John vi. 15.
[2] Luke xii. 14.
[3] Latham, Pastor Pastorum, pp. 403 ff.
[4] Gen. i. 27; Matt. xix. 4; Mark x. 6.
[5] Mark xii. 13 ff. and parallels.
[6] John xix. 11.
[7] Dante, Monarchia, Lib. i; cf. Purg. xxxii. 102:
'Di quella Roma onde Cristo è Romano,'
though this is not the temporal, but the eternal Rome.

hey were but carrying to somewhat fanciful extremes an argu-
nent based upon undoubted facts.

And so St. Paul, in the passage which I have taken for my
ext, claims no less than a divine sanction for the civil power:
The powers that be are ordained of God. . . . Render therefore
o all their dues.' And the magnitude of the claim is enhanced,
f we remember that this was written, not under any of the
etter Roman emperors; not under Trajan, whose virtues so
ouched the heart of the Middle Ages, that they represented his
oul as transferred to Paradise through the intercession of
St. Gregory, the apostle of the English[1]; not under a philo-
ophic saint like Marcus Aurelius; but, probably, under the
ain and vicious Nero.

If then such was the claim on the duty of subjects then,
how much greater the claim on us, who, for more than sixty
years, have lived under one of the very best of Christian
sovereigns.

We can most of us remember the kind of thought and speech
which was prevalent not so many years ago. It was a common
impression then that the part to be played by the institution of
Royalty in the future history of the world was a very slight
one. The growth of popular power, the spread of education,
and other causes, would reduce it to be nothing more than the
veil, and a very transparent veil, of a Democracy.

The history of the last quarter of a century has signally
falsified this forecast; and the present state of Europe gives it
an emphatic contradiction. At the present moment the question
of war or peace, that is for thousands, if not millions, the
question of life or death, hangs upon the fiat of some four or
five men.

Nor is the view of the insignificance of Royalty borne out by
the history of England as a whole.

The story of English Royalty reaches back some fourteen
hundred years. In 519, according to the traditional account,
Certic and Cynric assumed the kingship of the West Saxons;

[1] Dante, Purg. x. 82 ff.; Parad. xx. 43 ff.

and the reflexion of the compiler of the Saxon Chronicle, writing probably under Alfred, that 'the royal house of the West Saxons has ruled ever since that day,' has, with the exception of the Norman period, remained almost literally true down to the present time. For it was Wessex which grew into England; and the first idea of union, loosely and imperfectly realised under Egbert, was gradually wrought out in many years of suffering. Alfred saved England from the Danes, though at a tremendous sacrifice, and holds in real history the place which romance assigns to Arthur; a Christian king,

'Scarce other than my own ideal knight,'

who rolls back the tide of heathen conquest from his native land. We call him, and we call him rightly, 'Alfred the Great.' But in days nearer his own he was known as 'England's Darling.' Will not the historian of the future see a certain sad appropriateness in the fact that the Queen should have died in the year which is to celebrate the millenary of the death of this, the greatest of her ancestors, the one whom she so much resembled in her unswerving loyalty to duty, her constant labour for the good of her people, her unfaltering allegiance to truth? 'The most thoughtful provider for the widow, the defenceless, the orphan, and the poor, . . . most beloved by his people,' says Florence of Alfred. Asser calls him 'Alfred the truth-teller'; and we all remember how the great tribune of the people, as he was sometimes called, declared that the Queen was the most truthful person he had ever known.

So too after the fierce suffering of the Norman Conquest, it was Henry II who knit the framework of the country together by an administrative system, under the forms of which we, to a large extent, still live; while Edward I, taking up the idea, which Simon de Montfort seemed to have lighted upon almost by accident, made popular representation the permanent basis of our constitution, on the express ground that 'what touches all, should be approved by all.'

Once more, in the religious crisis of the sixteenth century, Henry VIII and Elizabeth, whatever their shortcomings, did much to impress upon the English Church that sane and sober character of a via media, which, in spite of extremists on either side, it has kept ever since.

We do not, at this stage of our national history, expect services quite of this kind from the Crown. And yet the services which it has rendered during the late reign have been simply immense. To take only two of the most obvious; two, on which the late Mr. Bagehot was fond of dwelling:—(1) It has been the symbol and sign of our unity, not only as a nation, but as an empire. In every quarter of the globe, millions upon millions of her subjects, who knew little or nothing of the nature of Parliaments, of the theory of constitutional government, of the responsibility of ministers, of the rise and fall of parties, looked up to the Queen as the bond of union between them, the mother and head of a vast family dispersed throughout the whole world; and this feeling had been deepened and strengthened to an extraordinary degree by the events of the last fifteen months.

(2) And closely connected with this is the second point. The experience of more than three-and-sixty years has taught us to look up to the Crown as the head of our home and family life. This has not always, indeed has not often been the case, in English, or in any other history. The feeling in our own case has owed something to the homely virtues of King George III, but almost everything to the unfailing love and sympathy of the Queen. In joy and sorrow, the humblest of her subjects might feel that they had a share in her sympathy and care. And this sympathy was not of that easy kind which stoops from painless heights to look upon the woes of others, but had been won through depths of suffering and sorrow; and the comfort which she gave to others was, in the Apostle's words, 'the comfort wherewith' she herself had been 'comforted of God[1].'

[1] 2 Cor. i. 4.

Perhaps it is these two elements which come out most strongly in the universal grief called forth by the heavy blow which has fallen upon us. We have lost our mother, the head of our vast family; and we go forth, like orphans in the night, to meet the unknown trials of a new century, without the guidance of that wisely moderating hand, without the sympathy of that feeling heart, to which we had learned to turn with a habit which had become an instinct.

'Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; ... fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.' May we not add, what was hardly possible in the then circumstances of the Roman world, 'love to whom love'?

'I exhort therefore,' says the Apostle in another place, 'that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty[1].' Surely we have need, at the present time, to obey this exhortation. 'Supplications, prayers, intercessions,' shall we not offer these for our new ruler and all his subjects? One of the earliest Christian prayers which has come down to us is a prayer for rulers in the Epistle of St. Clement of Rome[2]:—'Do Thou, Lord, direct their counsel, according to that which is good and well-pleasing in Thy sight; that, administering in peace and gentleness, with godliness, the power which Thou hast given them, they may obtain Thy favour.' Eighteen centuries have not made that prayer obsolete, or unnecessary. If there is much that is hopeful and encouraging in the opening of the new era, there is also not a little to cause anxiety even to the most buoyant; and problems have to be faced, which may affect not merely the well-being, but the very existence of our Church and Empire.

'And giving of thanks.' Shall we not render that too? Shall we not thank God that for more than three-and-sixty years He gave us such a Queen?

I dare say many of us read with absorbing interest those

[1] 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. [2] c. lxi.

extracts, covering the past century, which the *Times* reprinted from its own columns at the end of the year. But, among all those extracts, there was nothing, I think, more interesting than to read the proclamation issued by the Queen at her accession, three-and-sixty years before, and to note how exactly her hopes and promises were fulfilled. It is one of the sternest tests which can be applied to a life of any length. To most of us, if confronted in middle or declining years with the hopes and resolutions of our youth, would they not sound more like sarcasms than like prophecies?

Lastly, let us remember, that every great life, and every great example which is lived before us, brings with it a corresponding weight of obligation and responsibility. Let us pray with St. Ignatius that it may not turn to a witness against ourselves: *εὔχομαι ἵνα μὴ εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτὸ κτήσωνται*[1].

[1] Ad Philad. c. 6.

ADDENDA

Page 19. If the view taken in the text is correct, we might borrow a phrase from the Saxon Chronicle, and say that Asser was bishop *at* Exeter, rather than bishop *of* Exeter. See Chron. 897 and note.

Page 28. The medical friend who is cited on p. 21 has also given me his opinion with reference to the passage in Asser describing the mysterious disease with which Alfred was said to have been attacked during his marriage festivities. He thinks the malady indicated was probably stone in the bladder; and that it possibly *was* connected with the 'ficus' from which Alfred is said to have suffered. The latter was either piles or prolapsus of the rectum, conditions often caused in the young by the straining induced sympathetically by the presence of a stone in the bladder.

This makes the medical aspect of the case more intelligible. It does not, however, affect the literary and historical inconsistencies of the account which I have pointed out in the text.

Page 52. Opponents of the genuineness of Asser endeavour to meet some of the arguments advanced in the text, by saying that the forger made use of genuine documents. This does not touch the argument from the unity of style and diction. Waiving this, the difference between us is reduced to the question: Is Asser a genuine work which has been largely interpolated? or is it a spurious work embodying many genuine elements? The former seems to me more probable. But thus stated, the question rather resembles the famous problem in the *Oxford Spectator*, whether a certain College ribbon was a blue ribbon with two white stripes, or a white ribbon with three blue stripes. And there I am content to leave the matter.

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